

will lead to greater efficiency. In brief, that is the subject matter of the Bill, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (Minister for Railways—North): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.22 p.m.

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The **SPEAKER** took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 15th October, 1958.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

IRON ORE.

Amount Spent on Working Leases at Yampi Sound.

1. Mr. BRAND asked the Premier:

(1) Can he state the total amount expended to date by the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd., in working the iron ore leases held by the company at Yampi Sound?

(2) If not, will he obtain the necessary details for the information of Parliament?

Mr. HAWKE replied:

(1) No.

(2) The Perth office of the company has not this information available but has agreed to approach the head office for it.

BUNBURY HARBOUR.

Retrenchment of Labour.

2. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Have any men additional to the eight paid off on the 22nd August and the five paid off on the 29th August, been retrenched or dismissed since then from the Bunbury Harbour works?

(2) Why were these men retrenched or dismissed, in view of the fact that the allocation of General Loan Funds for improvements to the Bunbury Harbour increased from £105,000 for the year ended the 30th June, 1958, to £120,000 for the year ending the 30th June, 1959?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

(1) No.

(2) The financial provision for 1958-1959 involves a much greater expenditure on developmental dredging than was the case in 1957-1958, and this work is more expensive per man employed than the jetty reconstruction work.

VEHICULAR TRAFFIC BRIDGES.

Location and Other Details.

3. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Will he list—

- (a) the location;
- (b) the date of completion;
- (c) the final cost;
- (d) the source of finance,

of each vehicular traffic bridge that passes over this State's railway lines?

Mr. HAWKE replied:

- (a) Maritana-st., Kalgoorlie.
Hunt-st., Coolgardie.
Clackline.
Swan View.
West-rd., Bassendean.
Hotham-st., Meltham.
Seventh Avenue, Maylands.
Third Avenue, Mount Lawley.
Beaufort-st., Perth.
William-st., Perth.
Thomas-st., West Perth.
Kerr-st., West Leederville.
Axon-st., Subiaco.
Ashton Avenue, Claremont.
Swanbourne Station.
Eric-st., Cottesloe.
Leighton rubbish depot.
James-st., Fremantle.
Phillip-st., Bridgetown.

(b) (c) and (d) As these parts of the question necessitate a search of available records covering a period of 70 years, some days of work are involved and then without any certainty that complete information will be obtained. In the circumstances it is regretted the information is not available.

BUNBURY HARBOUR.

Expenditure for 1956-57 and 1957-58.

4. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

What was—

- (a) the total expenditure;
- (b) the individual projects;
- (c) the actual expenditure on each such project

on the Bunbury Harbour from Loan and Revenue funds for each year ended the 30th June, 1957 and the 30th June, 1958?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

- (a) Total expenditure for the year ended June, 1957:
Loan Fund £65,432
Revenue Fund nil.

Total expenditure for the year ended June, 1958:

Loan Fund £71,496
Revenue Fund nil.

- (b) Jetties and wharves.
Breakwater and groynes.
Shed and buildings.
Purchase of house.
Dredging.

(c)	1956-57.	1957-58.
Jetties and wharves	20,809	51,414
Breakwater and groynes	2,515	1,390
Shed and buildings	39,579	5,408
Purchase of residence	2,529	—
Dredging	—	13,284
	<hr/> £65,432	<hr/> £71,496

BULLFINCH-SOUTHERN CROSS RAILWAY.

Negotiations with the Western Mining Corporation.

5. Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

With reference to the Bullfinch-Southern Cross railway—

(1) Have negotiations with the Western Mining Corporation been completed?

(2) If so, what are the details of the agreement between the department and the corporation?

(3) If not, when are negotiations likely to be completed?

(4) Have services on this line been suspended?

Mr. HAWKE replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) In view of certain difficulties confronting the corporation, the Government has decided to leave negotiations open until early 1959.

(4) No. The report of the Royal Commissioner will have some bearing on future operations.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Loan Estimates.

6. Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education:

(1) On approximately what date were the draft loan estimates for the Education Department completed?

(2) What was the total of the department's loan requirements?

(3) Was provision made in the draft estimates for the expenditure necessary for the conversion of the former R.A.A.F. station at Cunderdin to an agricultural high school?

(4) What was the total of the department's loan expenditure?

(5) What amount was ultimately made available to the department?

(6) On what date were the loan estimates for 1958-59 confirmed?

Mr. W. HEGNEY replied:

(1) to (3) The preparation of draft estimates is a continuous process involving many discussions with departmental officers. The first draft list was submitted in March, 1958, and the final revision completed in September, 1958.

The Cunderdin Agricultural High School project was not included in the initial draft, but it was possible to include it in the final revision because of additional funds which had become available.

(4) Expenditure in 1957-58 totalled £1,454,564. This figure included £110,419 for work carried out in 1956-57 on deferred payment.

(5) £1,450,000.

(6) Now under consideration by Parliament.

BELMAY SCHOOL.

New Classrooms.

7. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) When is it anticipated that a start will be made on the building of the three new classrooms for the Belay school?

(2) Will this accommodation be available for the beginning of the 1959 school year?

(3) What type of construction are these rooms to be?

Mr. W. HEGNEY replied:

(1) At the end of this month.

(2) Available about March, 1959.

(3) Monocrete.

No. 8. *This question was postponed.*

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT TRUST.

Take-over of Tramway Buses.

9. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Have Tramway Department buses been taken over by the Metropolitan Passenger Transport Trust?

(2) If not, when are Tramway Department buses to be taken over by the Metropolitan Passenger Transport Trust?

(3) On what basis is the transfer proposed—

(a) in respect of vehicles, plant, equipment and premises, etc.;

(b) price;

(c) employees?

Mr. HAWKE (for Mr. Graham) replied:

(1) No.

(2) It is expected that Tramway Department buses will be acquired sometime during 1959, the exact date depending on the speed with which other acquisitions can be accomplished.

(3) No basis for transfer has yet been discussed.

JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN.

Interest in Purchase of Iron Ore.

10. Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

With reference to the answers given to question No. 19, on the 8th October, 1958, regarding the visit of Japanese trade, business, or other representatives in recent months—

(1) Did the Japanese visit Talling Peak iron ore deposits?

(2) Have such representatives been here on behalf of the one interest or do they represent several competitive interests?

(3) Does their visit mean that they would be prepared to take 1,000,000 tons of iron ore immediately at a price satisfactory to the State Government if the Commonwealth Government granted an export licence?

(4) What is the net amount expected to be available to the State Government if these interests obtain an export licence for 1,000,000 tons, and after allowing for all the costs that would have to be met in connection with mining, transport, etc.?

Mr. HAWKE replied:

(1) No.

(2) Several competitive interests.

(3) They were very interested in purchasing 1,000,000 tons or more of iron ore at a price satisfactory to the State, if the Commonwealth granted an export licence.

(4) The prices discussed would provide a reasonable profit to the State; but as negotiations are still current, actual figures cannot be disclosed.

SUBIACO BUS AND TRAM ROUTE.

Passengers Carried and Financial Results.

11. Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Since buses replaced trams on the Subiaco route, till the end of September—

(a) how many passengers have been carried by these buses;

(b) what amount of revenue has been received;

(c) have the buses shown a profit or loss, and what amount?

(2) (a) How many passengers were carried by trams for the same period last year?

- (b) What amount of revenue did the trams earn over this period?
- (c) Did the trams show a loss or profit during this period and what was the amount?

Mr. HAWKE (for Mr. Graham) replied:

- (1) (a) Omnibuses to Subiaco are through-routed to Victoria Park and, therefore, separate results are not available.
- (b) and (c) Financial results of individual routes are not kept.
- (2) See answer to No. (1) (b) and (c).

SEWAGE TREATMENT.

Subiaco Plant.

12. Mr. BRAND asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Is the sewage treatment plant being installed at Subiaco the same type of system as he saw in Germany and with which he was impressed both as to its efficiency and low operating costs?

(2) If not, what are the main differences in the methods of treatment and in potential operating costs?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Answered by No. (1).

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

NARROWS BRIDGE.

Penalties for Delay in Completion.

Mr. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In view of the further delay in the completion of the Narrows bridge until September, 1959, has the Government granted any further extension of time for completion of the contract by the company?

(2) Will any penalties be imposed on the company by the Government in view of this delay?

(3) Who is responsible for the difficulties which have arisen and which were referred to him in a parliamentary question asked yesterday?

Mr. TONKIN replied:

(1) No further extension of time has been granted as an application has not yet been received from the contractor, but it is known that additional time will be needed.

(2) No.

(3) As the major delay was associated with ground conditions which could not have been foreseen at the time when the contract was let, there can be no determination of responsibility.

CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS FOR NATIVES.

Sub-Junior Standard as Qualification.

2. Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that it has been advocated in another place by a spokesman for a political party that aborigines should be required to reach Junior or sub-Junior standard as a prerequisite to obtaining citizenship rights?

(2) Will he ascertain—

(a) How many hon. members in another place of the political party concerned are recorded as having attended schools in Western Australia?

(b) How many of those who attended Western Australian schools obtained the Junior?

Mr. W. HEGNEY replied:

(1) I have been advised that an hon. member in another place advocated that before natives were granted citizenship they should attain the sub-Junior standard.

(2) (a) Our records may not go back far enough. The matter will receive consideration.

(b) I have my own opinion as to how many have passed the Junior standard if the statement in No. (1) above is correct.

JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN.

Visit to Koolyanobbing.

3. Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

Does the fact that the visiting Japanese representatives visited Koolyanobbing but not Talling Peak mean that they are not interested in the Talling Peak deposits, but only in the Koolyanobbing iron ore deposits?

Mr. HAWKE replied:

No. The fact that they visited Koolyanobbing and not Talling Peak was due largely, if not entirely, to the fact that Koolyanobbing was much more easily accessible, in addition to which the Koolyanobbing deposit is being worked. The most they would see if they went to Talling Peak would be an outcrop of stone, iron ore, trees, dust, and flies, and perhaps a few men who are putting drills into the iron ore deposits to try to get an approximate idea of how deep the ore goes down, and also an idea as to its quality.

Mr. Court: If they are experts, they will still be interested.

Mr. HAWKE: If the hon. member cares to take this matter up to a far greater extent than I am able to in order to satisfy his thirst for information, I am prepared to give him the names and addresses of the gentlemen concerned.

NEWSPAPERS.*Removal from Newspaper Stand.*

4. Mr. **OLDFIELD** asked the Minister for Police:

Has the Minister seen the article in "The West Australian" dated Saturday, the 4th October, regarding the removal of newspapers from the newspaper stand at the C.I.B. office, and if so has he any comment?

Mr. **BRADY** replied:

The report is not correct. There is no newspaper vending stand in the office of the Criminal Investigation Branch. There is such an unattended stand in Beaufort-st. at the new bus stop outside the police Court building.

Following the appearance of the article, a complaint was made by the C.I.B. at the reflection on

- (a) their honesty, or
- (b) their professional ability.

The Commissioner of Police therefore wrote to the editor of "The West Australian" pointing out that the article was incorrect. The editor has conveyed his regrets and apologised in writing for the incident, which is now closed.

CITIZENSHIP FOR NATIVES.*Relevance of Christian Principles.*

5. Mr. **GRAYDEN** asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

In view of this Parliament's belief in Christian principles, and the fact that all members are required to join in daily prayer; and in view of the fact that such principles accept that all are heirs to the same inheritance and children of the self-same God, will he give consideration to—

- (a) Initiating a debate on the meaning of Christianity in order to clarify this for members of this Parliament if legislation designed to give equal citizenship rights to natives is rejected in another place?
- (b) Seek the consent of this House to invite leading churchmen to come to the Bar of this House and define Christianity for the edification of members?

Mr. **BRADY** replied:

At this stage I do not feel I am entitled to anticipate the decisions of the Legislative Council, or to assume that it—a House of review—will veto the legislation referred to; or to initiate any action. I do not feel the bringing of leading churchmen to the Bar of this House will influence the hon. members in another place. The decision the hon. members make is a matter between them, their conscience, their God, and their electors.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.*First Reading.*

Introduced by the Hon. A. M. Moir (Minister for Mines) and read a first time.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

- 1. Totalisator Duty Act Amendment.
- 2. Electoral Act Amendment (No. 3).
- 3. Local Government.

Transmitted to the Council.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.*Postponement of Nos. 3 and 4.*

THE HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Premier—Northam) [4.51]: I move—

That Orders of the Day Nos. 3 and 4 be postponed.

Mr. **Bovell**: It doesn't look as though the Government wants these two Bills to go through.

Question put and a division taken with the following results:—

Ayes—25

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hall	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May
Mr. Lapham	

(Teller.)

Noes—18

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Watts
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. Wild
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. J. Manning

(Teller.)

Patrs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Rhatigan	Mr. Hearman
Mr. Graham	Mr. Mann
Mr. Rowberry	Mr. Cornell

Majority for—7.

Question thus passed.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLERS.*Proposals for Assistance.*

THE HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [4.55]: I move—

That as the financial position of a number of war service land settlers is precarious and becoming more difficult, this House is of the opinion—

- (1) that the Government should take prompt action to ensure that the statement of the

Deputy Director of War Service Land Settlement made to the 1957 Honorary Royal Commission be given effect;

- (2) that the method by which such statement should be given effect should be that the excess liability be written off each year, the excess liability being the difference between the income derived from the property, having due regard to its management, and the total of—
 - (a) working expenses;
 - (b) a reasonable standard of living; and
 - (c) annual obligations in respect of structural improvements, stock and plant loans repayments, interest and rent;
- (3) that the Government should give early consideration to the appointment of an advisory committee, on which there are at least two practical farmers to review difficult cases; and
- (4) that the Government should make immediate arrangements for the Federal Minister to make an early visit to Western Australia to examine the position at first hand and to make any policy decisions requisite to give complete effect to the above.

In moving this motion, I would like to make it perfectly clear to hon. members of this House, as is indeed quite clear from the opening paragraph of this motion, that it is not intended to have application to all war service land settlers; because I am well aware that the circumstances in which war service land settlers in various parts of Western Australia find themselves differ very considerably, and the difference is due in most cases to the time when they were established upon the properties which they now hold under this scheme.

It would be quite obvious to most hon. members that where possession of a property was given to a soldier settler around the time when properties could be acquired by the Crown in a semi-developed state, and immediately after that when they took possession, a period of boom prices commenced so that a substantial section of those concerned in this settlement scheme would have found themselves and should now find themselves in a very satisfactory position; and in respect of such number of the total number of war service land settlers as do find themselves in that position, I desire to exclude them from any references I may make this afternoon.

On the other hand, there are a proportion of the war service land settlers who have either gone on to properties developed

from a virgin state in what are called the project areas, and which are yet not brought to their full carrying capacity, who are by no means in as satisfactory a position. They have had little or no opportunity to consolidate their situation by any period of boom prices. On the contrary, they have found themselves at the outset, one might say, of their settlement career, facing a state of affairs where the price of the commodities they had to sell, as has been discussed quite recently in one respect and supported in this House, has fallen to dangerously low levels.

There is also the section which has been engaged in the dairying industry whose position in many cases has given concern over a considerable period of years. I will, later on, say why I make that last statement. There are still, of course, it must be remembered, farms which have been, or are being, developed from virgin land in what are known as the project areas, which are not yet occupied; and the persons who occupy those properties in the next year or so, unless there is some unforeseen change in the commercial value of the product which they have to dispose of, in many cases will find themselves in a position which calls not only for hard work and strenuous endeavour on their part to make the most out of the property but also for the utmost sympathy and co-operation in every possible way from the community in general and this House in particular.

We hear from time to time, particularly in regard to the dairying industry—I will quote some figures in a few minutes in this regard—that those people who have left their properties, and have been unable to carry on upon them, were placed in that situation because they were either incompetent or—a phrase that I have heard frequently—no-hopers. If that is so to any great extent, it is a very serious reflection. I would suggest, against the Classification and Allotment Board under the war service land settlement regulations; because not only in the Act of 1949, but also in the conditions of 1954, it was laid down that applicants shall not be selected as settlers unless the classifying authority is satisfied as to their eligibility, suitability, and qualifications for settlement under the scheme, and their experience of farm work.

So while, of course, with every human institution there must always be a margin of error, and it would not be unreasonable to have one or two cases where the Classification and Allotment Board had made mistakes, the answers given by the Minister in another place, to certain questions asked in regard to the dairying industry, indicate a state of affairs which cannot be successfully related, I think, to any margin of error that the Classification and Allotment Board might have been expected to have; because the Minister there stated that 299 war service land

settlers had been allotted dairy farms, and that at the 24th September, 1958, only 197 were still occupying their farms. So there is an absolute difference of 102, or very nearly 40 per cent., as between the number that were allotted and those that were still occupied under the scheme in the dairying section at the time I have mentioned.

I would suggest that the margin is greater than the actual 102 because, if I understand the position aright, some of those who have left have been replaced, and therefore there are really more than 299 settlers who have actually been concerned in those properties over the whole period. At all events, I am content to take the figures as they are, at 299 settlers being allotted farms, and of those farms only 197 being still occupied. If that is going to be regarded as a satisfactory state of affairs by the citizens of Western Australia, in regard to one of the most important sections of war service land settlement; and if it is suggested that we should calmly and quietly see, on the 24th September, 1958—and I mention that date for a specific reason—102 of these people leave their properties, it will be a surprise to me.

It seems to me to be a matter which should occasion us the gravest concern; because, in the circumstances as I see them, the loss—not only financially, but also in every other way possible so far as the State and the individuals are concerned—will be colossal. But the hon. member in another place, anxious to elicit the fullest possible information from the Minister in that House, inquired what number of the 102 had been evicted; and the answer given was that 13 had been evicted—three for incompetence, nine for misconduct, and one by the R. & I. Bank; so the remainder, approximately 90 in number, had left voluntarily.

I suggest that persons (a) who have applied for rehabilitation under the war service land settlement scheme; and (b) gone before the Classification and Allotment Board; and (c) applied for properties until they got one; and (d) established themselves for a period upon the property, are not going to relinquish it voluntarily unless they are satisfied that the future opportunities for themselves and their families are so negligible as to make it not worth their while to remain. I am convinced that, rightly or wrongly, it has been that point of view which has been substantially responsible for the voluntary vacation of these properties that has taken place. The process is not at an end.

In the last couple of weeks, I am given to understand, a further six of these people have left their properties in the dairying industry voluntarily, because they saw no prospect of carrying on. I am told that no fewer than three, in the Denmark district, have done so in the last few days.

As I say, it does not seem to me that we have reached a very satisfactory position, in this particular aspect of war service land settlement; and if we have not reached a satisfactory position in regard to it, it is desirable for us to find out as rapidly as possible what should be done in order to enable these people to carry on their operations.

As I have endeavoured to indicate, it seems to me that, in view of the obligations of the Classification and Allotment Board, it must be assumed that the great majority, if not all of those 90 who have vacated their properties voluntarily, were both competent and suitable. If we are going to form any other opinion, I suggest we have to acknowledge that the board did not know its job.

The hon. member in another place, to whom I have referred, went on to ask further questions on this subject; and, unfortunately, the information which he received in answer to his further questions was of a very sketchy and unsatisfactory nature, in my view. He sought to ascertain some of the circumstances of the properties where these voluntary relinquishments have taken place; but the department seemed to be singularly ill-informed, according to the answers he got. He asked for the number of cows in profit on each property at the time of the relinquishment, and what other stock there was. He was advised that the information was not available; and, further, that statistics of this nature were not maintained by the department.

He desired to know the average butterfat content of the herd on each farm vacated. He was informed that the butterfat content was not known to the department. It seems to me a little extraordinary that some information relevant to his questions could not have been given to the hon. member. How can there be a proper assessment of the position in respect to any property, even in respect to those where actual eviction took place, unless such information is collected and collated while the property is being worked? Once having been treated in that manner it should be available for future reference. But, as I have said, according to the officers of the department, the information was not available.

The hon. member then inquired regarding the development of the properties vacated. He asked how many farms had been developed to an economic unit stage according to the standard laid down by the Commonwealth. But he was unable to obtain that information. He was advised that all the properties were established, or were in the course of establishment. Obviously, therefore, some were not developed to the standard laid down.

I think everyone who looks at this fairly will agree that it should have been possible, surely, to inform the hon. member how

many of these properties had been developed to the economic unit stage, as he called it! He was referring to the conditions and standards laid down by the arrangements with the Commonwealth. Surely if the department in Western Australia does not know to what standard these properties have been developed, so that it can give approximately correct answers to questions asked, there is something extremely wrong with the information in the department! If the information is not actually available, how can there be a proper assessment of the position?

Hon. members will recall that early last year an Honorary Royal Commission reported on the war service land settlement scheme in Western Australia; and, on the particular point to which I have just referred, at p.13 of the report, the commission said—

The standard as laid down by the Commonwealth for a dairy farm carrying 40 cows is:

- (i) 160 to 200 acres cleared and pastured, 60 acres totally cleared, balance with not more than four to five trees per acre.
- (ii) 40 acres of mowable land.
- (iii) Six main paddocks.
- (iv) Water laid on to each paddock if reasonably possible.

The members of the commission go on to say that evidence was submitted by most of the dairy settlers, and that the lack of water was one of their problems. They say that in one area six settlers made this complaint, and it was found that this water deficiency had existed for some considerable time—in some instances for six years; and as an adequate water supply is the basis of sound dairying, the commission could only come to the conclusion that somebody in the war service land settlement scheme had failed in his job.

The shortage of water points was referred to in the report of the Select Committee in 1952, of which the former Minister for Lands (the Hon. E. K. Hoar) was chairman. I am advised that today there are still properties in those areas where the water points have not been provided. As a consequence, it is perfectly clear that what the Royal Commission said then was not only justified at that stage but to some extent is still justified.

The department does not seem very certain in some cases as to the number of settlers that it has in the dairy areas at present. I will remind hon. members of a number of questions that have been asked in this House of recent weeks. On the 3rd September I inquired how many dairy farms were now occupied in the Narrikup area under the war service land settlement scheme. I was informed that 11 were so occupied. On the 24th September, which

is three weeks later, the hon. Mr. Logan inquired as to how many farms were still occupied in each of the recognised dairying districts; and, with respect to Narrikup, the answer given was eight.

Mr. Bovell: Three had fallen by the wayside.

Mr. WATTS: That is possible; but I have not been able to check up on it. So far as the questions are concerned, there was a difference of three over a period of three weeks. If it is as the hon. member for Vasse thinks, and three have fallen by the wayside, the position is so much worse.

Mr. Bovell: If they leave at that rate, there will be no dairy farmers under the war service land settlement scheme.

Mr. WATTS: Exactly; and that is what I am trying to convey. Forgetting the last information, we have already been informed that the situation is such that, of the 229 settlers, only 197 are left; and even that number is dwindling. However, I was told that 11 settlers are still left in the Narrikup district; while an hon. member in another place, in respect to a similar question, was told that there are eight settlers.

I shall take the number of 11 as being correct, because my questions involved further information about those who were in occupation. I was informed that three of these settlers were carrying more than 35 milking cows; four were carrying less than 35; and the others were carrying exactly 35. In those circumstances it is not unreasonable to accept 35 as the average number for the district. I daresay it is a bit generous but it will suit me for the purpose of this discussion.

The Minister said that the estimated return is based on 180 lb. to 200 lb. of butterfat per cow. I think 200 lb. is generous; it is more likely to be 180 lb. From all the information that comes my way it is very rare, over a 35-cow herd, to get an average of 200 lb. of butterfat per annum on a war service land settlement dairy farm.

But I am prepared to split the difference between 180 and 200 lb., which are the figures mentioned by the Minister, and say it is an average of 190. According to my arithmetic, 35 times 190 gives a total of 6,650 lb. of butterfat. The Commonwealth has seen fit to guarantee a price of 4s. a lb. I assume, and I think it is a reasonable assumption, that that guarantee would not have been forthcoming if the Commonwealth expected the amount, to be available in the ordinary way, was going to exceed 4s.

Certainly the price which has been current in recent weeks has been below 4s., and, as I understood it, hence the need for the guarantee. So, taking 6,650 lb. at 4s., we have a maximum amount of £1,330 that can be derived from that particular source

of income; and I think that is reasonable. To this can be added a net return from calves, and perhaps from pigs, of, say, £300 to £350 per year. I am prepared to take £325 as the figure; and in doing so, I get a total of £1,655 for the year, as the total maximum income that can be derived by an average person from such a property.

I do not think those figures can be seriously questioned. As a matter of fact, if hon. members will look at Hansard this session, they will find I have been pressing questions for some time; and the background of those questions indicates that the figures I have given here are reasonably accurate. So it only remains to consider now what we have to set off against that gross total of £1,655. We must not forget that that income is only derived by a property which has 35 milking cows. Yet we had information that of the 11 I mentioned a little while ago, four were carrying fewer than 35 cows.

In consequence, of course, the figure I have given would be reducible by some proportion, depending on the actual number. But, broadly speaking, the commitments of the settler of over 26 cows, and his working expenses, would not vary at all; they would not vary to any extent, anyway, and accordingly his position would be so much the worse. I asked the Minister a few days ago to give me his idea of the working expenses of such a property, and he said the department's view of the figure of working expenses ranged from £1,365 to £1,720. Not for one moment can I think that the hon. gentleman meant that a farm carrying 35 cows would be less than the figure of £1,720 mentioned as working expenses.

I assume, and I hope not wrongly, that the lower figures were referring to properties with lower carrying capacity. Anyway, as the figures have been given to me by the settlers as £1,911 on an average, I am certain that I can only take as a very conservative figure the Minister's £1,720. We find therefore, in respect of this property, such as that to which I have just referred—on a reasonably conservative basis where expenses are concerned, and a reasonably generous basis where income is concerned—that there will be a deficit of a minimum of £65 as against working expenses alone.

Mr. Bovell: That does not provide for living expenses.

Mr. WATTS: The hon. Minister said it did.

Mr. Bovell: No.

Mr. WATTS: If I remember aright, I think the Minister had allowed an amount of £550 for living expenses.

Mr. Bovell: His working expenses are very low.

Mr. WATTS: That is my opinion. I would think it should be at least £1,911, which is £200 more, roughly, than the Minister suggested—which will make a deficit of £265. But even on the figures stated by the Minister, as I endeavoured to point out, there is a deficiency of £65. That ignores all obligations of the settler in respect of rent, structural improvements, interest, and stock and plant loan repayments.

I do not know whether every hon. member of the House is aware that although the farm of a war service settler is, at the proper stage, given to him under a perpetual lease, the perpetual lease does not apply to what are known as structural improvements, which include the house, sheds, fencing, and other structural additions. Those the settler pays for over a period of 30 years. So the perpetual lease actually only leases to him the land with whatever pastures, and so forth, are upon it.

Accordingly, although the terms of repayment in respect of structural improvements are not ungenerous, following out the agreement between the State and the Commonwealth, there is, nevertheless, an obligation. Even the house, although charged up at an amount which I would say is distinctly reasonable, must run a settler into an obligation of over £2,000; and whatever other structural improvements there are increase that figure. Then, of course, there is interest at 3½ per cent. to be paid on the outstanding balance. Interest at 3½ per cent. is not high. I am frank enough to admit that in this day and generation it is very reasonable; but anything is high when one simply has not the money to pay it. Sixpence is a fortune if one has not got it.

That is really the position in this case. So far as I see it, there is a deficiency on working expenses alone; and under present and foreseeable circumstances I cannot see how, in this industry, there can be any other position. But on top of that, these commitments, rent, and structural improvement instalments, have to be paid. Then, of course, the stock has been obtained on a stock loan. These 35 cows, in the main, are owing the greater part of their value; perhaps in some cases more than their value. That has to be repaid over a period of years, and the same remark applies to loan repayments.

So the settler, in the circumstances to which I have referred, as he sees the year's operation before him at the moment says, "Well, I am going to be £200 or more down on working expenses, and the rest of the liability is going to stand out against me." Therefore, he is about as unhappy as it is possible for him to be, because there will be an excess of his obligations over his income in the average property of not less than £700 per annum; or, I should say, for the year.

That is all I wish to say in regard to the dairying industry, or in regard to that aspect of it; but as I said, there are other sections of war service land settlement which, while not at this stage in as difficult a position, are quite likely to be unless steps are taken to ensure that the same thing does not happen there.

I refer primarily to those who are dependent substantially on wool growing and who are not able at the present time, or indeed any time, to obtain any considerable revenue from grain crops. I make that distinction because we know that, at the present time, a person with a good wheat crop is reasonably assured of a market for it at a satisfactory price. That has been obtained as a result of the stabilisation process which has been set up in Australia over the last 10 years. So I do not want to include in this story people on the wheat and sheep properties. I want to refer only to those on properties which are dependent mainly on the production of wool.

It must not be lost sight of that under the war service land settlement scheme a settler supposed to be in a position to carry 900 sheep is responsible for what I understand are his full commitments; and I am firmly convinced—and I hope to be able to convince the House—that settlers in the position I have just referred to—namely, those dependent on wool—in this year of Grace are not in any circumstances able to carry full commitments on the present price of wool with 900 sheep. I doubt if they would be able to do it successfully on 1,200 or 1,400 sheep, but I am absolutely convinced that it cannot be done on the number which, at the present moment, is laid down by the war service land settlement authorities.

The price of wool, as everybody knows, has declined very considerably in recent times. When I moved another motion in this House about a month ago, if I remember rightly, the average price at the last sale was about 45d. Since that time it has fallen even lower than that, and is probably now little more than 40d. per lb. So, from 900 grown sheep, allowing a cut of 10 lb. per head, which is reasonably generous, at 3s. 6d. per lb. one is only going to get a return of £1,600.

One would, of course, get some return from culled sheep and lambs, but I think a generous allowance in respect of that would be £400; and as most of the properties that I refer to are in a position to carry a few cattle as well, not for milking purposes—except, of course for the home—but for beef purposes, I think one can allow £400 or £500 for the return from that aspect on a reasonably well managed property. I suggest that these are absolutely the maximum figures that one can hope for; and they come to about £2,400 as the gross revenue.

One has to consider what are the working expenses on a property of that calibre. To begin with, one will not get away with less than 40 tons of superphosphate; and I think the better opinion is that, if one wants to make the property worth while, one should use more than that if the property is being developed to ultimately carry 1,500 sheep. But we will allow £650 for superphosphate, including freight or cartage.

Living allowance we must again put in at £550, which makes a total of £1,200; and there will only be a total of £700 for all the other expenses, such as wages, seed, shearing costs, wool packs, fuels, oils, licences, rates and insurance, vermin eradication, and contingencies. So the total expenses on such a property are £2,000. Such a property has to carry under present circumstances a rental of £450, interest of £313 or thereabouts, and loan repayments of about £600.

So quite obviously there is again a substantial deficiency of some hundreds of pounds; and nothing, so far as I can see, under present circumstances, that the settler can do is going to enable him to get out of the obligations which he has incurred.

I am not suggesting that no consideration would be given to his position in a year's time, in 18 months, or in two years' time if circumstances indicated that he was in difficult straits and had remained on the property. But I am very much afraid these people will not remain on their properties unless they know what the position is going to be now; and it should be very clearly laid down and made public on what basis this problem, when it arises, is going to be handled.

I have brought this motion before the House because I am terribly concerned about the position of these people, and am also quite satisfied that the state of uncertainty in which a number of them find themselves is going to be extremely detrimental, not only to the ultimate success of a war service land settlement scheme, but to the interests of Western Australia itself.

Before me, I have a letter from a dairy farmer, who is not in my own district. I suppose he wrote to me because there was some publicity given to the fact that I had given notice of this motion. He says this *inter alia*—

In the best interests of repayment to the Commonwealth and at the same time improve the settlers' financial position, I would earnestly suggest that the loans be made free of interest. Quoting my—

Stock and Plant A/c. Loan £1,700,
30th June, 1958.

Structural Loan A/c. Loan £2,700,
30th June, 1958.

Total interest on all a/c's. £160 p.a. I have four years left to pay stock and plant interest; by paying interest at

that rate I would have reduced the amount by £640. Temporarily ignoring the structural loan and concentrating on the short term loan, I could repay the additional £1,060 in four annual payments. Then a concentrated effort on structural loan—20 years left out of original 30 years. At a continued repayment of £250 per year, it would eliminate total debt of £4,400 in little over half the approved time and at the same time really establish a farmer on the land, and that was the original intention of the scheme.

To prevent any smart moves of getting rich quick, if this move was ever to become a fact, a clause could be inserted that any sale of total assets within a given time, the deferred interest would become a first charge against any such sale. In this way you would only be assisting those really desirous of staying.

I see the repayment of Commonwealth capital as a most desirable thing and I see such a concession as I have suggested, as not new. Interest free loans, bounty on Australian built tractors and such like are all aimed at assisting to establish industry. In this instance, it would be nothing else. A further saving effected would be that the improved financial position of settlers would, at an early date, make them acceptable as bank clients and so, eliminate the duplication of the Rural and Industries Bank that we see in the War Service Land Settlement office at Plain-st. This office and staff cost would be unnecessary and represent a direct saving to the Commonwealth and State or else leave them free to undertake new land schemes.

That is not written by a man, I suggest, who is anxious, as has been alleged to me on certain occasions, to do the Government out of anything, but by someone who is, broadly speaking, seized with the financial position on his own property, in a manner similar to that which I have been indicating in the remarks I have been making in the last half-hour. He has been good enough, unsolicited so far as I am concerned, to put some very reasonable views into writing.

The 1957 Royal Commission, at page 6 of its report, referred to a statement made by Mr. Nicholls, the Commonwealth Deputy Director, War Service Land Settlement. This statement was in reply to a question in regard to the inability of properties to meet the full commitments. Mr Nicholls said—

Each case would be considered on its merits to determine what adjustment of the settler's account is necessary in order to give sound prospects of success.

He further stated—

I have not the slightest doubt that any proposals for writing back of capitalisation or adjustment will be very favourably considered if submitted to the Commonwealth.

Up to a point, I agree with the statement attributed to Mr. Nicholls in that report. But if the statement that every case would be treated on its merits means that there is to be an individual investigation into each case before any principle or policy is laid down, then I do not agree with it; because it is quite obvious, I suggest, that we will have a group of settlers all in much the same position, and if the policy were laid down that "if the position is so-and-so, we do such-and-such," then it would be the business of the settler to prove he came within that category. And if he came within the category, he should be entitled to the benefit of the policy. I feel that steps will have to be taken along the lines I have suggested, in order to relieve these people of their excess obligations, about which there can, in my view, be no doubt whatever.

If the price of wool deteriorates further, then the position of the grazing person is going to be worse than I have indicated. I cannot see any prospect of getting better than the Commonwealth guaranteed price for butterfat, and I have already used those figures in such estimates as I have been able to make. I believe that in both cases I have established that in present circumstances it is impossible for either of these types of settlers to meet their obligations in any period of 12 months.

I submit it is not reasonable to carry forward these obligations to next year and the year after. I consider the problem should be settled each year, and that the accounts of these people—if it is established that they cannot pay them because of circumstances such as those I have mentioned—should be cleared off. I think that is a reasonable proposition.

I do not want to give anyone anything to which he is not entitled. To put it more plainly, perhaps, if the inability to pay is the responsibility of the individual, because he is clumsy or lazy, I do not want to assist him; but I am convinced that that is not the case and will not be the case in the great majority of these instances. So in my view it is highly desirable that some such action as I propose in the motion should be taken.

On motion by the Hon. L. F. Kelly (Minister for Lands), debate adjourned.

BANK HOLIDAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 24th September.

MR. GAFFY (Canning) [5.50]: In supporting the second reading of the Bill, I do not wish to indulge in repetition; but I would like to refresh the memories of hon. members on one or two points. They will recall that the bank officers conducted amongst themselves a poll dealing with the subject matter of the Bill, and at that poll there were 1,129 votes cast, making it a 91 per cent. vote. Of the votes cast, 94 per cent. were in the affirmative, and 6 per cent. in the negative. This result, of course, substantiates the belief that they were really anxious for this legislation.

As a consequence, they approached the Arbitration Court; and I shall now read the last paragraph of what the President of the Court had to say—

Well, we are all of a clear opinion on this point. I do not think there is any doubt that this Court has jurisdiction to fix the hours of employees in banks, even although, under the Commonwealth it is, if not legally, practically necessary for banks to keep open on Saturday mornings, and it might be, as Mr. Adams suggests, legally necessary for them to do so, but where, as here, it seems certain that any award made by this Court of a five-day week would only result in extra overtime being paid, in that the employers would be forced to keep their businesses open despite the Court award, we are all agreed that the Court, even although technically it may have jurisdiction, would not, except in very exceptional circumstances, make any such order. I think that is as far as I need go.

Because of the anxiety of the bank officers to come to Parliament, it is only fair that they should be given a sound reason for the non-closing of banks on Saturday mornings. From a study of the speeches made in opposition to the Bill, we find that two main points emerge—

- (1) that the measure was introduced by a private member and not by the Government; and
- (2) like legislation is not operating in other States.

Other minor points have been raised against the Bill, but these appear to be the main ones. Emphasis has been placed on the fact that the legislation was introduced by a private member; so much so that it leads one to the supposition that had it been introduced by the Government, probably a different attitude would have been displayed. If this assessment is correct, then in my opinion it is a poor

foundation upon which to build the construction of an argument against a five-day week.

If, on the other hand, my assumption is not correct, I cannot see any reason for prolonging the argument against this aspect of the matter. I believe that a private member has a perfect right to introduce any measure, and that any Bill he does introduce should be treated on its merits and not rejected because we dislike the person who introduces it. If we legislate along those lines, I am afraid our legislation will not pass muster.

The other point is that there is no similar legislation in the other States. This is another approach with which I cannot agree. I am unable to see why we cannot make a decision on legislation without having to wait for similar legislation to be brought into being in another State. Whilst much emphasis was placed on this aspect, little emphasis was placed on the fact that similar legislation is operating in Tasmania and New Zealand; that it is a success in those places; and that everyone, apparently, is happy with it.

Dealing with this point, I propose to read two letters written by the then Leader of the Opposition in Queensland, the hon. Mr. Nicklin. This first letter, addressed to the General Secretary of the United Bank Officers' Association in Brisbane, states in the final paragraph—

However, there is one point on which we would like your advice. What effect would Saturday closing have on Savings Bank activities? We think this is important, particularly as there has been an extension of Savings Bank activities of late.

That letter was answered on the 18th April, and the following is a further reply from the same hon. gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition:—

Many thanks for your letter of the 6th inst. and for your explanation re Savings Bank activities. This will clear up the doubts that we had on this question.

That discussion was introduced by a private member. The then Leader of the Opposition in Queensland is now the Premier of that State, and the present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Duggan) asked him this question—

In view of the Government's request to the Industrial Court to conduct an inquiry into the question of Saturday bank and shopping hours in Queensland, will he inform the House whether the remission of this matter to the Industrial Court represents an act of political adroitness designed to extricate both Government parties from their written declarations to the United Bank Officers Association in 1956 in favour of closing all banks on Saturday.

The answer was—

The Government is firmly pledged to govern for the benefit of all sections of the community without fear or favour. However, it is not beyond seeking the advice and guidance of a competent tribunal such as the Industrial Court on such matters as that referred to by the Honourable Member in his question. The approach to the Industrial Court has been for the Court to examine and advise on not only the question of abolition of Saturday bank trading but also as to the merits and demerits of a general abolition of trading on Saturdays and the substitution therefor of late shopping and banking hours on Friday nights. The Government's move in this direction is a prudent act to acquaint itself with all phases of a matter which is of such vital importance to all sections of the people before determining any policy in regard thereto. It would be improper to rush headlong into making any substantial changes in our established way of life without a thorough investigation of all aspects of the matter and a consideration of the views of those most vitally affected.

According to that letter, what is lost on the merry-go-round is made up on the swinging-boats. We are now aware that similar legislation to this has been introduced by a private member in South Australia, and in that State it has met with quite a good reception in the Legislative Assembly. I understand that today it has passed the third reading in that House and will go before the Legislative Council next Wednesday.

So it appears that the arguments presented in this Chamber against the passing of legislation for the closing of banks on Saturday morning on the ground that it should have been introduced by the Government and not by a private member will not hold water in the light of subsequent events in the Eastern States. The other excuse that there is no like legislation in the Eastern States also goes by the board.

I did intend to say a few extra words on this subject, but in the light of subsequent events I will refrain from expressing them. However, I will now quote the remarks which were made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and which appear on page 1077 in Hansard No. 8 of the current Parliamentary Debates. They are as follows:—

The Minister was not in the House when I made my observations on that aspect; but if we are going to do these odd things we are only going to accentuate the fact that we are, as a State, the odd man out.

I submit that we are now the odd man out, in view of the fact that this State

appears to be the last to pass legislation to provide that banks shall close on Saturday morning.

However, I will leave that point for a moment to quote what the hon. member for Narrogin had to say on the question. The following remarks appear on page 867 of No. 7 of this session's Parliamentary Debates:—

The following is a return from six suburban districts containing a summary of the total transactions for each day of the week:—

Monday	....	....	4,030
Tuesday	....	....	3,283
Wednesday	....	....	2,976
Thursday	....	....	3,803
Friday	....	....	5,837
Saturday	....	....	2,690

On Saturday the banks were only open for 1½ hours and the number of transactions nearly equalled those on some week days.

The hon. member went on to speak in the same strain in regard to country banks, but I will not quote those remarks. Although the hon. member for Narrogin told us that banks were open for only 1½ hours on Saturday, he did not tell us how many customers were turned away. I suggest that if the banks were open for two hours, they would not have any more customers; but, on the other hand, if they were open for only one hour, they would still have the same number of customers as they had in 1½ hours.

Mr. W. A. Manning: On what do you base that?

Mr. GAFFY: On the hon. member's own figures. The hon. member for Narrogin, however, did not tell us the number of people that were turned away, so we must assume that there is no necessity for the banks to remain open.

Mr. W. A. Manning: Why do you assume that?

Mr. GAFFY: The hon. member did not tell us the number of customers that were turned away, so we can reasonably assume that there is no necessity for the banks to remain open on Saturday mornings. I support the second reading.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [6.7]: I have much pleasure in speaking to legislation such as this for the first time since I have been a member of this Chamber; and I wish to signify my assent to the proposals contained in this measure. I have listened to debates similar to this over the past three years and this type of legislation had been aired many times before my entry into this House.

One significant factor seems to emanate from the discussion on the Bill; namely, that according to members of the Opposition, business would be crippled if the banks were closed on Saturday mornings

and bank officers were emancipated and granted the rights and privileges that are enjoyed by most workers in industry in these modern times by being able to use Saturday mornings for their own leisure.

The fact is that banks are open for only 1½ hours on Saturday mornings to enable the public to conduct their banking business. Therefore 90 minutes is all that remains to prevent a full week-end being enjoyed by bank clerks. We enjoy a clear week-end; and, as I look around, I notice that civil servants in all departments, school teachers, and hosts of other workers are in the same position. They are all able to spend the full week-end at their own leisure. The point behind these remarks is that employers—whether they be Government or private individuals—believe that it is to the advantage not only of the workers, but also of the employers themselves for employees to enjoy a free week-end.

Mr. Nalder: What about all other businesses? Bring a Bill in to close all other businesses on Saturday morning!

Mr. EVANS: I believe we could; but we must crawl before we can walk. We must start with somebody, so let us start with the bank clerks. Would the hon. member agree to the closing of all businesses on Saturday mornings?

Mr. Nalder: Yes—dairy farmers, poultry farmers and the like! Let us close them all down on a Saturday morning!

Mr. EVANS: Let the hon. member look after those people, and we on this side of the House will look after the people we represent. The fact is that we say this should be done, but the Opposition says it cannot be done. The whole question revolves around the point: If it can be done, how can it be done? I noticed recently that the trading banks have now entered the savings bank field with a resultant expansion in savings bank business. We now find that the trading banks are setting up savings bank branches in departmental stores and other places where the people are inclined to congregate.

Mr. W. A. Manning: That is because the public want longer trading hours.

Mr. EVANS: It means that the trading banks are endeavouring to increase their business interests. On a Saturday morning the trading banks are open for only 1½ hours. The banks usually close their doors at 11 a.m. However, departmental stores, in the main, do not close until 12 o'clock, and the savings bank agencies in those stores operate until the stores close.

Mr. W. A. Manning: That is why the banks have placed the agencies there.

Mr. EVANS: If banks were closed on Saturday morning I can imagine a large increase in the establishment of these

trading agencies in the various departmental stores. I would not object to that. If the banks decided to do that, it would be their own concern. However, I would rather see all business closed down on Saturday morning so that everyone could enjoy a free week-end.

Nevertheless the demand for the establishment of an additional number of these savings bank agencies would be met by the banks. The number of these agencies is still increasing, and their trading activities do not cease at 11 a.m., as is the case with the ordinary trading banks. Therefore, if the banks were closed on Saturday morning it would not make much difference to the flow of business that is usually conducted on that morning.

Mr. Perkins: You would then have the position of shop assistants carrying out the duties of the bank officers.

Mr. EVANS: Yes, until such time as the shop assistants are able to have Saturday morning off also.

Mr. Perkins: If you are sincere in that, why not endeavour to have it granted to them now?

Mr. EVANS: I am looking after these people, and the hon. member can look after the others. The Opposition stands for the interests of private enterprise. Yet what do we find that its leading Liberal light in South Australia is doing? I would suggest that Sir Thomas Playford would be—

Mr. Roberts: The best Premier in the Commonwealth!

Mr. EVANS: —the living example of what the Opposition should look up to and say, "Sir Thomas Playford is the leading light in Liberalism." If he is, the hon. members of the Opposition in this House should take a leaf out of his book. If they do not seek to follow the lead given by Sir Thomas Playford, they are a long way behind.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: We allow for differences of opinion.

Mr. Roberts: You have to watch these South Australians!

Mr. EVANS: I have here a cutting from the Adelaide "Advertiser", dated the 10th October, 1958, which reads as follows:—

Bank Employees Accept Hours Offer.

Three organisations representing about 5,000 bank employees in South Australia last night accepted the proposal of the Premier (Sir Thomas Playford) for a five-day trading week for banks.

Banks will close on Saturday mornings but will remain open till 5 p.m. on Fridays if Parliament approves an amendment promised by the Premier in the Assembly on Wednesday.

The Premier's offer—conditional upon acceptance by bank employees' organisations—was made during the debate of a private Bill introduced by Mr. Dunstan.

We find that the Premier of South Australia did not treat the Bill that was introduced by a private member in that State with scorn, as the hon. members of the Opposition have endeavoured to treat this Bill. I must give credit to Sir Thomas, who moved an amendment to the Bill that was introduced in his House to meet an objection that he had to the legislation. Yet hon. members of the Opposition in this House try to exert pressure—not so much in this House, but through the hon. members in another place—to deprive not only bank officers, but all workers, of the enjoyment of having their week-end free to recuperate after their week of toil. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. MARSHALL (Wembley Beaches) [7.30]: I desire to support this Bill, and I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Leederville for once again introducing it in this House. He had long experience of the banking industry, and I think he can speak with some knowledge of the industry in which he was engaged for so many years. I consider that, as one who has been associated with that industry, he is very well qualified to express an opinion on the desirability of introducing a five-day working week.

For a good many years I have been associated with the industrial life of this State, and similar requests for legislation to be introduced have come under my notice. In many ways I have been responsible for dealing with such types of legislation. It can be understood that most of my activities came within the province of the Arbitration Court. I well remember the days, in the particular industry in which I was engaged, when we worked a 56-hour week. I well remember the struggle over the years to reduce those hours from 56 to 48 a week; and then from 48 to 44 hours; and finally from 44 to 40 hours.

Hon. members will realise that it was somewhere about 1950 when the Commonwealth Government saw fit to initiate proposals for legislation, or should I say to give a direction to the Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitration to implement a 40-hour week. This proposal was subsequently adopted by the various Arbitration Courts in the States. As a consequence, it can be said that the vast majority of workers throughout the Commonwealth enjoy not only a 40-hour week, but also a five-day working week.

In introducing this Bill, the hon. member for Leederville is more aware of the conditions applying in the banking industry

than any other hon. member here. Notwithstanding any criticism raised by hon. members opposite as to the attitude of employers towards this question, it is generally recognised that conditions of employment have, over the years, been amicably agreed on between the employers and the employees in this industry.

In every industry there has always been some difficulty. In the one with which I was associated for many years it was necessary to make provision for certain members to undertake shift work, with the 40 hours spread over seven days of the week. I am referring to the employees of the S.E.C. Naturally, in such an undertaking every employee could not be given a five-day working week; and as it is a public utility some of the employees are required to work a seven-day week. It was found possible, however, to grant to the great majority of the persons, engaged in that industry a 40-hour week spread over five days.

It has been said that the banking industry is a public utility. I feel that the employees in that industry are fully aware of all the circumstances, and as to whether it is necessary to keep banks open for six days of the week. The hon. member for Canning has indicated that a ballot, or a consensus of opinion, has been taken; and it is the view of the bank employees themselves that banking service to the public can be adequately and efficiently rendered on a five-day working week. That is the reason why the hon. member for Leederville has, over the last few years, persisted in introducing the Bill in an attempt to implement the desires of the employees in the banking industry.

We should give very serious attention to the views of the employees. Too much consideration has been given in some quarters to the views of the employers only. If the vast majority of those engaged in the banking industry—namely, the employees—consider that an adequate service can be given to the public on a five-day working week, I see no reason why their request should be refused. In view of the fact that many other industries are enjoying a five-day working week, I have no hesitation in supporting this Bill, and I hope it will be passed.

THE HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [7.40]: I do not desire to say very much on this Bill. All that needs to be said has been submitted by hon. members on this side; and from the other side, the story has been repeated very often. I want to make it clear that as far as we in this party are concerned, we are taking the same view as we took previously, because no case has been put up for any alteration in the situation.

Mr. Potter: You have no Playfords in your party in this State.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member is using Sir Thomas Playford as a glorious example in politics for the time being for the purpose of his argument. I have heard hon. members opposite being very critical of Sir Thomas Playford at other times. Regarding the announcement that Sir Thomas Playford agreed to a five-day working week in the banking industry, provided the banks agreed to extend the working hours on Friday until 5 p.m., I would point out that that position has not yet been clarified. If it is to be brought about by legislation, the relevant Bill will have to run the gauntlet of Parliament in that State. Until it becomes law, we should not hold it up as a glorious example of what should be done in the banking industry in this State.

In any case, I am quite unimpressed with the suggestion that we should change our minds because Sir Thomas Playford, for some strange reason or other, has changed his mind. He has taken an attitude which implies that he was up to this point opposed to the granting of a five-day week through legislation.

Mr. Potter: It did not read that way.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member has read the report upside down, and I would not be surprised at that. In reply to letters received from members of the Bank Officers' Association prior to the last Legislative Council elections, my party made our position quite clear. Our candidates replied stating that first of all they were not opposed to bank officers having a five-day week if it was obtained through arbitration, or as a result of negotiations with the employers. If the banks have decided, in conjunction with their employees, to introduce a five-day week, then we on this side are not opposed to it.

As a result of an official inquiry in the form of a Select Committee, it was clearly indicated that there is yet a demand for banking services on Saturday mornings, particularly in country districts.

Mr. Johnson: You should read the report of the committee.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. member is referring to his own report, but I am talking about the evidence that was presented. It is evident that as long as there is Saturday morning trading and shopping there will be a demand by the public for banking service. I do not believe that it is the prerogative of this Parliament to decide the matter. It should be decided through arbitration because the matter relates to working hours and service. In my opinion it is an industrial matter.

Mr. Potter: There is a reason why the Bill has to be presented here.

Mr. BRAND: There is a tendency throughout Australia to extend banking hours, and to provide hours of banking well outside of those set down at the present time. And it would seem to me that in

the case of Western Australia, the hon. member for Leederville, who is an ex-bank officer, has taken this subject upon his shoulders and made it a highly political one, year in and year out. If the party which he supports, and which is now in Government and fully responsible, feels that it can support this measure finally, I wonder why it did not take the lead and introduce it in this House.

I repeat that it would be in the interests of all States—indeed of the banking service throughout the Commonwealth—if this matter were made the subject of some conference at a Federal level when State Premiers could decide what the banking hours should be throughout the Commonwealth.

Mr. Lawrence: You would not get a say yourself, then.

Mr. BRAND: That is only a matter of opinion. I so seldom get a say; and, indeed, neither does anyone else. I would go so far as to say that the hon. member for South Fremantle knows little of what is going on. As a matter of fact, I have seen him come in here and change his mind on a matter because he knew he had to; therefore, I could be excused for not having any say in what the present State Government would be doing about banking hours. But it is the opinion of this side of the House that the question is one which could be decided at a Premiers' conference. If the Premier of South Australia or Tasmania has decided that it is time to make a change, then let us have some uniformity in this matter.

Mr. Tonkin: If the matter were made the subject of a Premiers' conference, a decision would be made by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. BRAND: That is beside the point. The Deputy Premier is only dragging red herrings across the path. It would definitely be a move in the right direction if this matter were taken by the Western Australian Premier to a Premiers' conference, where it could be discussed. Whether the Commonwealth would make the decision is beside the point. It would be discussed and decided on that level.

Again I would say that if there is anything in the argument put forward that there is so little demand for banking service on a Saturday morning, I think it is incumbent on the banks themselves to arrange a satisfactory roster system for their officers on a Saturday morning; then these officers would only have to work occasionally on a Saturday morning.

Mr. Nalder: Some are already doing that.

Mr. BRAND: So I believe; but I think it could be more universal. I readily understand the attitude of the bank officers. I also readily understand why they have

filled up the gallery tonight. I do not blame them one little bit, and would be there myself if I were in their position. But we are here to decide the pros and cons, and not be impressed by the political pressure and political capital which the hon. member for Leederville has attempted to make out of this matter. I do know for a positive fact that the hon. member for Leederville has used this subject, and the Bank Officers' Association, to gain political capital; and, indeed, if we read the letters and circulars which he distributed, prior to the Legislative Council elections, we would have positive proof that a lot of these men are having the wool pulled over their eyes. They are not quite aware of just how they are being used in this question. I am opposed to the second reading of this Bill and trust that ultimately it will be defeated, in the hope that at some time we can arrive at a satisfactory decision on a Federal level as between the employers, the bankers, and the bank officers.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [7.50]: As a former bank officer, nothing would please me more than to agree to a measure which would enable bank officers to have a five-day working week; but as a member of this Parliament, I have a certain responsibility to do what I think is in the best interests of the people of Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition has referred to the fact that in his opinion, it is necessary to raise this matter on a Federal level. Banking hours are decided by Federal legislation under the Bills of Exchange Act. Our legislation,—

Mr. Johnson: Say again.

MR. BOVELL: —the Bank Holidays Act. is designed for the specific purpose of enabling this Parliament to grant special holidays to bank officers for special purposes. I say again that the Commonwealth legislation, (the Bills of Exchange Act) controls banking hours generally throughout Australia, and I believe—

Mr. Johnson: Not hours.

MR. BOVELL: I mean days of operation. I believe that this matter should be discussed on a Federal level, when all the State Premiers could submit their opinions to the Federal Government with a view to amending the Bills of Exchange Act. This back-door method employed by the hon. member for Leederville, is not in keeping with the principles which I consider should be adopted for the purpose of providing a five-day working week for bank officers in Western Australia.

I must refer to certain editorials that have appeared in the official publication of the Bank Officers' Union of Workers of Western Australia. Some 12 months ago, there was an editorial which was party political in its worst sense. I have not, unfortunately, a copy of that editorial

in my possession, but it was almost instructing bank officers to support at elections those members of the State Parliament who would support a measure to give bank officers a five-day working week. I say that that is party-political pressure and intimidation of the worst kind. Having been a bank officer myself, for a good number of years, I say it is foreign to the principles which I knew as a bank officer, and I believe that it is only the opinion of a small minority of bank officers.

If this matter could be raised at a Federal level, an arrangement could be made in regard to banking hours throughout Australia, through the correct channels—the Bills of Exchange Act—instead of through an Act of this Parliament which is designed specifically to provide throughout the year holidays of a special nature, such as Royal Show Day. If it is considered proper for banks to be closed on Saturday mornings, I repeat that the correct way to bring this about is, as the Leader of the Opposition has suggested, to have the matter raised on a Federal level and the decision applied on an Australia-wide basis; and not to prostitute an Act of this Parliament, which is designed for something completely different. Therefore, until my suggestion can be adopted, as much as I would like to see a five-day working week for bank officers themselves, I do not intend to support the measure introduced by the hon. member for Leederville, because it is party-political in the worst sense.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville—in reply) [7.55]: It is customary, when replying to a debate, to thank all hon. members who have taken part. In doing this, I would like to thank the hon. members on this side of the House, who have agreed that a five-day week for bank officers is a normal reform. I would like to thank hon. members on the other side of the House who have spoken on this matter, because, having spoken so many times on this particular subject, it has become difficult for me to find anything fresh to say, and those on the other side who have spoken have at least given me something to reply to.

I feel that most of it is, as I say, not very fresh; but there is a little bit of new information, and it would be as well to place that before the House. This is the fifth occasion on which this particular Bill, in identical form, has been brought forward in this Chamber. On the first occasion, I was sitting on the other side of the House and did not get very far with the Bill. In fact, it failed very early. On the other occasions, it has been before this House when I have been sitting in this seat, and has been passed each time. It is worthy of note that it was supported by every member of the Labour Party, including the Premier and all his Ministers, the hon. member for Mt. Lawley, and the hon. member for South Perth.

The last occasion on which it was agreed to in this House, it was passed on the voices; and I would be surprised if it does not pass on the voices again. The history of the five-day week for bank officers is Australia-wide. It is, in fact British empire-wide and world-wide. It has been achieved in a number of places of varying degrees of business prominence. As everyone knows, it has been in effect in Tasmania for a very long time; and in New Zealand for years, although there the shops closed first.

Mr. I. W. Manning: So also in Tasmania.

Mr. JOHNSON: Not so in the whole State. Only in Hobart were the shops closed first; but in the rest of the State shops do some amount of trading, although the banks are now shut. The five-day week also is experienced in Alaska, Algeria, Argentina, Canada, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, French West Indies, Guam, Haiti, Monaco, New Zealand, Panama Canal Zone, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico and Tasmania.

Mr. I. W. Manning: What is the position in Russia?

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member for Harvey had better go and find out. I do not know, because I have no information on it. If I were to believe what I read in the general Press, there is no-one in Russia with any money to bank; but that may be, of course, inaccurate.

Mr. Court: If you had a bank account there, they would probably shoot you.

Mr. JOHNSON: I think I would probably get shot anyway. To continue. As regards the United States, 45 States, and the District of Columbia—for the benefit of hon. members opposite, that is the home of the Federal Government of that country—permit or require the banks to close on Saturdays throughout the year. Banks in three States are still open six days a week, but some have legislation pending which would legalise the five-day week.

That shows that this is not a novelty, and that there is no trading reason why banks should not close on Saturday mornings; and it also indicates that there is no reason why the banks could not be closed and the shops remain open, because there are no restrictions on shopping hours in many—if not all—of those States of the U.S.A. where the banks work only on five days.

Mr. Brand: Has it ever been explained to you why the Labour Government in New South Wales has not granted the banks a five-day week?

Mr. JOHNSON: They have never been asked to do so.

Mr. Brand: Don't talk rubbish!

Mr. JOHNSON: Prove that they have been asked to grant it!

Mr. Court: When introducing the measure you said the reason why they could not get it in New South Wales was that the Premier and the head of the Bank Officers' Association there were not on speaking terms.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes. I said they have never been asked.

Mr. Brand: What about Victoria?

Mr. JOHNSON: There they have been asked; and in Queensland there is an undertaking by the Premier, a man who I think is named Nicklin—

Mr. Roberts: You should remember that one.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have here a photostat of his signed and written agreement to it, dated the 28th March, 1956.

Mr. Brand: Was he Premier then?

Mr. JOHNSON: He was then Leader of the Opposition; but people who sign documents normally honour them.

Mr. Court: What did Mr. Gair tell them at the same time?

Mr. JOHNSON: I could not care; but I do not think he said anything very nice. At all events, he is not a very intelligent person.

Mr. Brand: I suppose he was intelligent before he left the A.L.P.

Mr. JOHNSON: The big point is that Mr. Nicklin has agreed that the banks in Queensland should close on Saturdays, and the fact that he has not honoured his promise to do something, made when in opposition, is something which brings the parliamentary system into some disrepute and shows no particularly good spirit on his part. He is acting like the worst type of politician.

Mr. Brand: He is a very fine gentleman.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is of considerable interest to know that Sir Thomas Playford (Premier of South Australia) has, according to the latest information, taken the unusual step of suspending Standing Orders to pass a Bill, containing very nearly the same wording as this one, through the Lower House of the South Australian Parliament, and has given his undertaking to support it with his influence, in the Upper Chamber of that Parliament. That Bill was introduced by a private member and was supported by the Premier, on the other side of the House in that State.

I will now quote from the Adelaide "Advertiser" of the 9th October where, under the heading, "Move for Bank Hours Change," we read—

The South Australian Government will facilitate the passage of a private Bill to close banks on Saturday mornings if bank officers support a Government amendment designed to keep banks open for public business until 5 p.m. on Fridays.

A statement to this effect was made in the Assembly yesterday by the Premier, Sir Thomas Playford.

I will not read the whole of the article, which is lengthy; but Sir Thomas Playford did say that the statement by Mr. Dunstan, the private member who introduced the Bill, that it had the support of the employees, was correct, and he believed it was very benignly regarded by the management of some South Australian banks. Further on the report continues—

Later he proposed to table an amendment and if the amendment was acceptable to bank officers and they would advise him in writing to that effect he would support the second reading and assist the passage of the Bill. Mr. Lorne, A.L.P. interjected, "and get it knocked out up top",

The type of action which would be taken by hon. members opposite if they had their way in this Parliament—

Mr. Brand: Half the legislation introduced here would never see the light of day were it not known that it would be thrown out in another place.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is not true. The report continues—

The Premier: No, Mr. Speaker, I say I will support the passage of the Bill. If I support the Bill I will do so to the limit of my ability and I believe I may have some influence even in another place.

The amendment, of which I have a copy, is a new clause to be moved by the Treasurer, and I would point out that Sir Thomas Playford is Treasurer of South Australia as well as Premier. It reads—

Clause 1A. (1) This Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor by proclamation —

A somewhat unnecessary provision, seeing that Sir Thomas is the Governor's chief adviser in such matters—

(2). The proclamation bringing this Act into operation shall not be made until the Governor is satisfied that arrangements which will operate generally throughout the State have been made and will be carried out for keeping trading banks open until five o'clock p.m. on every Friday which is not a bank holiday.

Once again, seeing that Sir Thomas is chief adviser to the Governor on the matter of issuing proclamations, he could satisfy himself on that point without putting it into the Act.

Mr. Brand: Then why did he put it into the Act?

Mr. JOHNSON: In Chinese language, to save face, I think. To continue—

(3). If after this Act has been brought into operation the arrangements as mentioned in Subsection (2) of this section cease to operate the Governor may by proclamation declare that the principal Act shall thereafter have effect as if this Act had not been passed.

That is the amendment which Sir Thomas Playford has caused to be inserted in the Act, and which he has assisted to pass through the Lower Chamber and has promised to assist in passing through the second Chamber of that Parliament. The bank officers of Western Australia have taken steps to call meetings of their members and to give official instructions to do anything necessary to agree to and to bring into operation some form of change in hours—if necessary—to bring to the public facilities later than 3 p.m. on Fridays—

Mr. Bovell: The Bill does not provide for that.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is not necessary for the Bill to do so. The hours at which banks close are governed by no legislation, but are traditional. If bank managements decided that their premises should remain open until any hour up till—I think—5.30 p.m., they could do so, and it would not be necessary even to place an advertisement in the Press.

During wartime, the hours for which banks stayed open were restricted under the National Security Regulations, to give a 2 p.m. closing hour, in order to make it more possible for bank officers, whose numbers were depleted owing to so many joining the forces, to conclude their work and get home some time before midnight. The 2 o'clock closing continued for a considerable time, and there was no real pressure brought to bear for 3 o'clock closing up to the time when it was reintroduced.

I do not think anyone was aware of any pressure to revert to the 3 o'clock closing. I am of the opinion that extended hours on Friday—even with Saturday closing—are not really required for anything other than to pander to certain people who are incapable of arranging their affairs in a businesslike manner.

Mr. Perkins: There is a lot of business done in the banks in country towns after 3 p.m.

Mr. JOHNSON: There is a lot of business done in all sorts of trades after the normal hours; but that is no excuse or reason for opposing a change in banking hours.

Mr. Perkins: It is not legal, of course, but is an attempt by the bank officers to meet the convenience of the public.

Mr. JOHNSON: I think the hon. member for Roe is suggesting that, if granted a five-day week, the bank officers would be less obliging than they are now.

Mr. Perkins: I am not suggesting that; but they will not be there on Saturday mornings, and there are a lot of people in the country towns on Saturday mornings.

Mr. JOHNSON: If the banks are closed, the bank officers will be at the same places on Saturday mornings as they would be on any other day during hours when the banks are not open. As the hon. member says, a lot of banking is done in country towns at present after banking hours, and I would say that bank officers in those areas will do the same sort of thing when the banks are shut on Saturdays as they do now on the other days of the week, apart from Sunday. As the hon. member says, some business is done outside normal trading hours in country towns—

Mr. Perkins: But you do not suggest that if the banks are closed on Saturday mornings the bank officers will be available!

Mr. JOHNSON: I am not suggesting that they are there out of hours now.

Mr. Perkins: They are there until 5 p.m., although the banks shut their doors at 3 p.m.

Mr. JOHNSON: I trust that they are not there till 5 p.m. on every day of the week. If so, they are working much more than their 40 hours. However, that is beside the point and I think the hon. member is anticipating difficulties which will not arise. My point in this regard is that bank officers are prepared to be as co-operative as is necessary to achieve the reform with as little difficulty as possible. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition—and subsequently, his Leader—has claimed that this is just a political matter.

Mr. Brand: Do you still believe in the nationalisation of banks?

Mr. JOHNSON: That is beside the point. I am concerned at present with the hours during which bank officers work.

Mr. Brand: If through your political letters, which you send out to the Bank Officers' Association, you are able to get Labour Governments in every State in the Commonwealth, is it the policy of Labour Governments to nationalise banking; and do you believe in it?

Mr. JOHNSON: Let us put it this way: I understand that under the Constitution, as reviewed by the House of Lords, the position is impossible of achievement.

Mr. Court: But do you believe in it?

Mr. JOHNSON: I am a Labour member; and of course I believe in it. It is plank No. 2 of our platform.

Mr. Brand: That is all we want to know.

The SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of members to the fact that the nationalisation of banking is not dealt with in this Bill, which relates to the closing of banks on Saturdays.

Mr. JOHNSON: The hours which people work are not in the least related to the ownership of the business in which the hours are worked. The hours will apply equally to all banks, and that is a major point. It has never been my desire to make this a political matter; and the fact that it has become political is entirely the fault of hon. members on the other side.

Mr. Brand: Why?

Mr. JOHNSON: Because they have not the brains to understand law, commerce, or people.

Mr. Brand: Look at Mr. Intelligentsia! The coming Treasurer! Who are you to judge, anyway?

Mr. JOHNSON: I do know something about banking.

Mr. Brand: When did you get that experience?

Mr. JOHNSON: I had 30 years of it—hard labour.

Mr. Brand: It should have been at Fremantle.

Mr. JOHNSON: As that point has been raised, I should like to draw attention to the suggestion put forward by the hon. member for Nedlands, and the Leader of the Opposition, that people joined the banking profession knowing what it required, and that they should not expect any change.

Mr. Court: We never said that.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is what the hon. member said. He should read his speech and he would see that that is so.

Mr. Court: We did not say that. No-one said that they should not expect any change. We said that they joined the profession with the knowledge of what it involved. Do not distort the facts!

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member implied that they should ask for no change. Thirty years ago the bank officer was undoubtedly the senior man in the white-collar profession. He was the best paid and the best conditioned clerk. When other people were working 44 hours a week—

Mr. Bovell: He was certainly not the best paid.

Mr. JOHNSON: —he was working 42 hours a week. When he was working 5½ days a week, and knocking off at 12 o'clock on Saturdays, nobody else knocked off before him; in fact, all other businesses were closing at 1 o'clock on Saturdays. But since then the five-day week has become the Australian standard through

all our Arbitration Court awards. Thirty years ago a bank officer worked 5½ days a week, and so did everybody else. Now he is one of the few who are working a 5½-day week, and there are more members of the banking profession who joined before the change than after it. They are entitled to expect some degree of improvement, such as that received by people in other industries.

People in the accountancy business used to work until 1 o'clock on Saturdays. The same applied to people in the insurance business, timber merchants, wool brokers; and, in fact, all other businesses along the Terrace. But now, on a Saturday morning one could fire a cannon down St. George's Terrace, and, apart from hitting an odd motorcar full of people going to some sport or other, no damage would be caused.

Mr. Roberts: What is the position in Hay-st.?

Mr. Brand: It is a long time since you have been in town on a Saturday morning.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have been to town on a Saturday morning.

Mr. Brand: You certainly have not if that is your idea of what goes on.

Mr. JOHNSON: I would now like to draw attention to the suggestion made by the hon. member for Narrogin that banking is a service industry. I say categorically that banking is not a service industry, and I will give evidence to support that statement. A service industry is one such as the dry-cleaning industry. The people in that industry are paid for the service they render for other people. The transport of goods from one place to another is a service; and the people engaged in that work are paid for the job they do. Banking is not a service industry; it is a merchandising industry, the same as selling an article. The banks are merchandising credit.

Mr. W. A. Manning: Then you do not believe that the banks provide a service?

Mr. Brand: Bank officers claim that they give a service.

Mr. JOHNSON: Shops give a service when goods are sold, but it is not the same sort of service as that given by a dry-cleaning establishment.

Mr. W. A. Manning: You say that banking does not involve a service?

Mr. JOHNSON: It involves no more service than is involved in the selling of goods in a shop. Service is not the principal part of the industry. The profit made in a shop comes from the difference in the buying price and selling price of an article.

Mr. Court: As a result of giving service.

Mr. JOHNSON: No; as a result of selling the article.

Mr. Court: As a result of giving the service.

Mr. JOHNSON: Do not interrupt; it is rude!

Mr. Tonkin: What service do you get from a self-service shop?

Mr. Court: The goods you want at the time you want them and at the price you want to pay.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Leederville is replying to the debate.

Mr. JOHNSON: The profit in a shop is drawn from selling goods at the price the people will pay. The profits in a dry-cleaning establishment, or a transport establishment, are drawn from payment for services rendered, not for goods supplied. A transport establishment does not sell any goods. All it does is to take articles from one place to another, and people pay for that service.

Mr. Brand: Isn't that service?

Mr. JOHNSON: I may be labouring the point, because of the difficulty of leading members of the Liberal Party to understand these things; but the point I am making—

Mr. Brand: It is difficult to understand you.

Mr. I. W. Manning: You would make a good school teacher.

Mr. JOHNSON: I think I would, too, because I am having to teach hon. members opposite.

Mr. Watts: You would be a very bad school teacher.

Mr. JOHNSON: Only because I have very poor pupils. The point I am making is that the profit from a business is drawn from what it does; and the profit from banking is not drawn from service given. It is drawn entirely from other sources.

Mr. Brand: No, from the service given to its clients.

Mr. JOHNSON: I should like to quote an authority in relation to the source of bank profits. It is from a book which was in our library, but is not there now. I looked for it at the tea suspension, but I could not lay my hands on it at the time. I already had an extract from this book, "The Australian Trading Bank" by Professor Arndt, the Professor of Economics at the Canberra University College. In Chapter VI, on the subject of Capital and Income, dealing with receipts and expenditure of all trading banks for the years from 1946-47 to 1952-53, he said at page 146—

By drawing on all the information that has been mentioned, it is possible to obtain a broad picture of the sources from which the trading banks derive their income and the manner in which this income is spent. Table XX shows the receipts and main forms of disposal of all trading banks (including the Commonwealth Trading

Bank and State Banks, but excluding non-Australian business) for the financial years 1946-7 to 1952-3.

Looking first at the composition of the banks' receipts, we find that at the end of the war about three-fifths were derived from interest on advances and one-fifth each from interest on securities (including special accounts) and bank charges (which include overseas exchange income).

The proportion derived from bank charges has remained fairly stable through the post-war years, rising during the export boom and falling a little since 1951-52. The movement bears out the impression derived from other information, that income from overseas exchange business accounts for the major part of bank charges, perhaps two-thirds to three-quarters. But as we would expect, the contribution of advance income has increased since the war at the expense of interest on securities.

The source of bank profits derived from the service given is negligible. Most of the profits are derived from merchandising credit in its various forms, including the movement of credit between countries.

Mr. Bovell: I always thought banking was a profession.

Mr. JOHNSON: There are many professions, and I do not see that the interjection has any bearing on whether it is a profession or a wage business.

Mr. Court: Even if we concede what you say about the source of profit, can you imagine a bank without a service counter?

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes, I can.

Mr. Court: An Australian conception of a bank without a service counter?

Mr. JOHNSON: It is very easy to understand; and I think almost any bank officer would tell the hon. member, if he asked, that there is no banking transaction that cannot be carried out completely by correspondence. On occasions, even the giving of change is done through the post.

Mr. W. A. Manning: Would you invest in a correspondence bank?

Mr. JOHNSON: There is no reason why not.

Mr. Roberts: What about the travel-bookings section in banks. Is that a service?

Mr. JOHNSON: It is an excrescence on banking; it is not the proper service of a bank, but is an intrusion on another person's type of business. The provision of travel accommodation is not part of banking.

Mr. Court: Surely you do not deny the public a service?

Mr. JOHNSON: I am not denying the public a service; but I am drawing attention to the fact that banking is not a service industry, and the transactions that flow across the counter are not the major part of banking.

Mr. W. A. Manning: A lot of bank officers would be put out of work under your system.

Mr. Bovell: I think that is quite so, because I can remember the hon. member at a meeting some time ago.

Mr. JOHNSON: The fact that the hon. member for Narrogin cannot understand the situation does not alter the facts. He listened to all the evidence given before the Select Committee and failed to appreciate it. It does not alter the fact that he was given every facility for calling whatever evidence he thought fit. I gave him complete freedom of choice in the calling of evidence. I in no way influenced the evidence that was to be given. I thought he would take that evidence at its face value; but I found that for party political purposes he chose to forsake decency and fair dealing and ignored the evidence. Why, is beyond me.

Mr. Roberts: What utter rot!

Mr. JOHNSON: That is the way I feel about it. I thought that he was a man with some business acumen, a man with some experience, and I went to a great deal of trouble to ensure that he had more than a fair go. Yet in a report that amounted to 24 paragraphs he could agree only with the opening paragraph stating that we sat for so long; and the closing paragraph, in which we said thank you to the people who did the reporting and so on.

Mr. W. A. Manning: They were the only two that were correct.

Mr. Watts: That is what I thought from reading the evidence.

Mr. JOHNSON: Most of the other paragraphs were just the facts laid out; and if anybody opposite read them, he would know that there were only four or five paragraphs that contained any matter that was an opinion; the rest were a short resumé of the facts put before us.

Mr. Watts: It seemed to me that your report ignored the evidence altogether.

Mr. JOHNSON: It evaluated the evidence.

Mr. Watts: It ignored the evidence. It mentioned only the evidence which suited the report. That was my impression, and I must be frank about it.

Mr. JOHNSON: That may be so, because evidence which did not favour the report could not be given.

Mr. Watts: There was ample evidence that you neglected.

Mr. JOHNSON: The fact that people gave some evidence that failed to stand up under cross-examination does not alter the fact that the evidence can be evaluated, and there is little if any need for banks to be open on Saturday mornings.

There is no need for a Premiers' Conference on the subject, as is shown by the fact that the Premier of Western Australia has voted for this matter on several occasions, and that the Premier of South Australia has actually assisted in this matter. The banks are already closed on Saturdays in Tasmania, and the Premier of Queensland has agreed to it in writing. That means that four out of six States support this legislation; and four out of six is a majority in any democracy. Four out of six is a majority, and there is no need to go to a Premiers' Conference.

The suggestion by the hon. member for Vasse that this is a back-door method of introducing reform appears to me to be a slur upon the training of the legal gentlemen sitting on various Arbitration Courts who have said that this matter is one that can be dealt with only by the State Parliament. That has been said both in the Federal Arbitration Court, and the Arbitration Court of the State.

Mr. Bovell: The Bank Holidays Act was designed for a specific purpose and the hon. member for Leederville cannot deny it; it was designed for special holidays such as Christmas and extra State holidays. There is no denying that fact.

Mr. JOHNSON: The wriggling of the hon. member for Vasse perhaps helps him to ease his conscience, but it does not alter the fact that he disagrees with the Presidents of the Arbitration Courts, who say that this matter can be dealt with by State legislation only. If the hon. member understood the construction of the Bills of Exchange Act in relation to non-banking days, he would agree, I am sure, that it would be extremely difficult and involved to amend the Act to produce the desired effect.

Mr. Bovell: That is the only way to do it.

Mr. Watts: By putting one word into the requisite section. Put the word "Saturday" in; that is all.

Mr. JOHNSON: I think the hon. member will find it more difficult than that.

Mr. Watts: I have it here.

Mr. JOHNSON: Then why the heck doesn't the hon. member make his own speech?

Mr. Watts: I want to correct your speech.

Mr. JOHNSON: The fact that the Leader of the Country Party is a lawyer, does not alter the position that his opinion is not shared by people who are eminent in law, even though not in politics.

Mr. Bovell: We are dealing with a political situation in this matter; and I have explained my position.

Mr. JOHNSON: I realise the hon. member for Vasse has explained his position to his satisfaction, but he made it clear to nobody at all.

Mr. Bovell: I would draw the attention of the hon. member to the Bills of Exchange Act—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Leederville has the right to reply.

Mr. JOHNSON: If the hon. member for Vasse had read, or listened to, or understood the speeches I have made on this subject previously, he would realise that that has all been dealt with at great length, and it would be a clumsy method.

Mr. Bovell: I cannot understand the hon. member for Leederville.

Mr. JOHNSON: I know the hon. member cannot understand anything. It would be clumsy to deal with it through Federal legislation, because it would require a completely different Act. But four of the six Premiers have agreed to it, and there is no doubt about that. The matter is not, or should not, be party-political.

Mr. Bovell: The hon. member for Leederville has done his best to make it so.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have gone to great lengths to prevent the members of the Liberal Party from making this a party-political issue.

Mr. Court: Would you like to read to the House your letter of the 1st May, 1958?

Mr. JOHNSON: I do not doubt it has been made party-political, but that has not been my choice. It was thrust on me by hon. members of the Liberal Party; and if on this occasion they fail to assist the passage of this Bill in another place, then natural results will follow.

Mr. Hearman: Is that a threat?

Mr. JOHNSON: The suggestion that people should never vote in their own interests seems to me to be contrary to all thoughts of politics and democracy. The evaluating of one's interests is the whole idea behind the theory of competition; in fact, it is the entire philosophy set out by the Liberal Party, commercially, that people should have freedom of choice, and should evaluate their own choices.

I fail to see why they should not be consistent. But I think I can say that this is not party-political. The Premier of South Australia has shown, by his action, the correct way to remove it from the field of party politics. I know that the greatest

degree of pressure is being exerted in Queensland in the political field, not by a Labourite but by a Liberal—a Mr. Herbert (member for Sherwood) I understand, who occupies a similar position to mine as secretary to the Government Party.

There is no need for this to be party-political; but, naturally, if someone placed an advantageous political opportunity in my hands I would be foolish if I did not take it. I see no reason why this matter should be party-political; and I saw no reason why it should be so when I first introduced the measure.

Mr. Roberts: You said you opposed private enterprise.

Mr. JOHNSON: I live in a world of private enterprise; I have no choice. I do not say it cannot be improved upon, or that people should not work a five-day week.

Mr. Bovell: You would close the private banks if you had a chance.

Mr. JOHNSON: I might mention that the number of bank officers required to deal with the volume of business would not be changed by anything but a depression. This occurred during the last depression; and if we have another it may do so again. Nothing else is likely to reduce the number required. However, as I have said, if we run into another depression there may be a reduction of bank officers. But that will not depend upon the legislation in this place.

Mr. Bovell: There will be a greater reduction of bank officers if the private banks close their doors.

Mr. JOHNSON: The mumblings of the hon. member for Vasse are beyond me. The point I want to make is that the banks can be closed without any serious effect on business in general. It is a reform that can only be given by political action; it is a reform that has been given in one State of this Commonwealth; it is in the process of being brought forward in the second State of the Commonwealth; has been promised in the third State; and should go through in this, the fourth State. I see no reason why Western Australia should be the last State, despite the fact that there are some people in Opposition who do not think that Western Australia should make any advance at all.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes—24

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Evans	Mr. Moir
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Norton
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hall	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes—14

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Crommellin	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Watts
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. Wild
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. I. Manning

(Teller.)

Majority for—10.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; Mr. Johnson in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—put and passed.

Clause 2—Commencement:

Mr. BOVELL: I would like the Premier to clarify the position regarding the proclamation of this Bill, if it becomes an Act. The Government alone has the power to proclaim the Bill, and the Premier should tell us what his intentions are in that regard.

Mr. HAWKE: I am surprised that a question of this simplicity should come from our mischievous friend, the hon. member for Vasse. In the event of the Bill becoming law the Government would, when it considers the circumstances favourable, prepare the necessary proclamation; and have it approved in Executive Council and brought into operation.

I presume the hon. member does not expect me to say how long a time would elapse between the granting of approval to the Bill by Parliament and the issue of the proclamation. It would be necessary, naturally, for all concerned to have a reasonable amount of notice, and for the parties to be enabled to make the necessary approaches to the Courts of Arbitration for finalisation in connection with this matter.

Mr. BOVELL: I thank the Premier for his comments. I think the Committee should know something of the Government's intentions. To the best of my knowledge the Premier did not address himself to this measure. We at least know now that the Government will be in no hurry to proclaim this measure. Usually proclamation is only a machinery matter, but the Premier in his reply to my request for information did not exactly indicate that only the machinery process would be entailed but that the proclamation might be delayed. I want to assure the Premier that I was not being mischievous in any way.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Schedule to Act 48 Vct., No. 9:

Mr. BRAND: As this is the main clause in the Bill, I would like to point out that the hon. member for Leederville has emphasised his desire that the banks should

be closed each and every Saturday and the issue should not be party political. We on this side of the House say that the whole matter has become highly party political and the real issues have been pushed aside. The general interests of the officers seem to have been lost in the overwhelming political controversy, as well as the matter of service. In order that the Committee will know quite clearly what I mean, I am going to read a letter that was written by the hon. member for Leederville dated the 1st of May, 1958. It is as follows:—

Dear Friend,

The subject of what I write affects you and is one on which I feel very strongly, and on which I believe we agree—the five-day week for bankers.

The legislation to implement this reform has been passed by the Legislative Assembly three times, and on each occasion was defeated by the Legislative Council—last year by one vote. This action would be impossible in almost any other part of the British Empire. For instance, the House of Lords operates under a method whereby any Bill passed twice by the Commons becomes law—the maximum delay being 12 months.

It is my intention to introduce the Bill again next session and I have no doubt that it will, for the fourth time, pass the Assembly, but may again fail in the Council, unless something is done to change some of the members in the Council.

Between now and the beginning of next session, we can improve the chance of its passing the Legislative Council.

You are enrolled for the Metropolitan Province. I urge you to vote on 10th May for A. A. Buggins. He has given me his personal guarantee that he will support the Bill. His opponent has spoken against the reform and voted against it.

To pass this reform, it is essential that Buggins should be elected. You can assist by encouraging others who are sympathetic like wives, relatives and friends, to also vote for Buggins.

To have Saturdays for yourself, on Saturday, 10th May, VOTE BUGGINS 1, before you go to work and see that everyone else you know does the same.

There is a note on the side as follows:—

When this goes through I will be as happy as you are.

On the 7th of May he wrote a similar letter which reads as follows:—

Dear Fellow Banker,

Five-day Week for Banks.

Last time the Bank Holidays Act was before Parliament it was defeated by one vote in the Legislative Council.

On the previous presentation of the Bill it had been supported by two non-Labour members, namely Hons. Cunningham and Griffith. There was a Legislative Council election between the two presentations and, following his re-election for six years, Cunningham voted against the measure, so despite an increase in Labour representation, the Bill was defeated by one vote.

Hon. A. Griffith, who is now a candidate for Suburban Province, was the only non-Labour member to support this Bill last time. According to his letter published in the April "Banker", he will, if re-elected, follow the Liberal line. Just what that line is is defined by Liberal Leader Brand, who is contemptuous of the "comparatively small sections (bankers) and cannot support the reform".

Compare this with the attitude of Premier Hawke who offers "continued, consistent support," and the Labour candidates for your province, H. R. Fletcher, who is "completely in favour".

It seems improbable that Griffith can be relied on to support the five-day week if he is re-elected.

If you are concerned to obtain Saturday off, it is certainly far preferable to support Fletcher, and I urge you to do this with your vote on Saturday, 10th May.

The attitude of Premier Hawke—

Mr. Tonkin: That narks you, doesn't it?

Mr. BRAND: I was thinking of Warder Thorne, who got the sack. I suggest the bank officers should not be led up the garden path.

Mr. BOVELL: This clause deals with the closing of banks on every Saturday. I would issue this warning to bank officers: that it was the desire of the hon. member for Leederville to close the associated banks every day. I attended a meeting some 10 or 11 years ago in Perth when the hon. member for Leederville stood out on his own and supported nationalisation and socialisation of the banking system in Australia.

Point of Order.

Mr. Evans: I raise this point of order: The hon. member for Vasse is dealing with the subject of nationalisation, which has no connection with this Bill, and I hold that he is out of order.

The Chairman: The hon. member for Vasse is not out of order and may proceed.

Committee resumed.

Mr. BOVELL: I have made my point and feel that the Commonwealth legislation—the Bills of Exchange Act—is the proper

avenue through which this matter should be dealt. I hope that the bank officers will be realistic and will not make a decision without due reflection and consideration.

Mr. JOHNSON: The Leader of the Opposition is upset with certain facts.

Mr. Brand: I was not upset with the result of the elections, anyway.

Mr. JOHNSON: That happened to be in his favour. He would like facts to be those towards which the morning Press leans very strongly. The other facts are still facts despite the fact that he does not like them.

Mr. I. W. Manning: What did you do with the evidence of Goyne Miller?

Mr. JOHNSON: He came to the Select Committee with a prepared statement which on examination was contrary to his evidence.

Mr. Brand: Who was that?

Mr. JOHNSON: Goyne Miller. He appeared before the Select Committee on behalf of the Perth Chamber of Commerce. He may know a lot of things, but he did not know much about banking.

Mr. Roberts: Has he been overseas lately?

Mr. JOHNSON: He may have been to Bunbury for all I know. The hon. member for Vasse reiterates his opinion that this matter should be dealt with through the Bills of Exchange Act. However, I regret to inform him that legal men disagree, and the opinion of the Federal Treasurer (Sir Arthur Fadden) is that it should not be done in that manner but through State legislation.

Mr. Bovell: It is my opinion, and I am sticking to it.

Mr. JOHNSON: I presume the Federal Treasurer was speaking with the research that is available to people as prominent as he, and he has come to the conclusion that the Bills of Exchange Act is not the proper measure through which to do it.

Clause put and passed.

Title—put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

ESPERANCE LAND.

Re-negotiation of Agreements for Development.

THE HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [9.0]: I move—

That in the interest of maintaining confidence in the land development at Esperance and in the absence of any evidence of a plan to ensure the required progress by the Chase Syndicate of the development of the

land held by them under the agreement, this House calls on the Government to take immediate steps to re-negotiate the agreement with members of the syndicate or any other interested persons, in order to take advantage of the present keen interest in land in this area.

Firstly, might I say that I appreciate the co-operation of the Premier in postponing this item, earlier today, when I was absent.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I intimated previously that we would move a motion calling on the Government to re-negotiate the agreement with the Chase Syndicate in order that the public might be made aware of the position at Esperance. After we gave that intimation, it appeared that certain members of the syndicate, including Mr. Chase himself, might find ways and means of overcoming the difficulties confronting the syndicate, thereby ensuring that some progress was reported as a result of the agreement. All hon. members, I feel sure, are most anxious that this area of land—apart from any other—should be developed so that it might carry settlers and farmers.

Esperance is rather isolated; and it is some distance from the main centres. It was hoped there would be a build-up of the area and that, as some people have put it, it would ultimately become another province east of Albany. I much regret that what evidence we have today is indicative of the fact that many problems are being faced down there, but the prospect of the original idea going ahead, is not very bright. It would appear to us that the real reason for the lack of progress and for the lack of confidence, is that the people who made the agreement with the Government have not been able to find the necessary finance.

I was not in the House when a special effort was made by the then Minister for Lands (the Hon. E. K. Hoar) to bring down certain Bills to amend the Land Act, in order to be able to negotiate with Mr. Chase, who was representing a certain syndicate, and draw up this agreement with him. As far as I am aware, there is no legislation which ratifies in detail the agreement made between the Chase Syndicate and the Government.

Although I was not here, I have read the debate, and it is evident that a number of hon. members on this side of the Chamber expressed some doubt regarding the information which was given to the House, and they pointed to the lack of assurance with respect to the availability of the millions of money that were necessary if the agreement was to be honoured in any detail. The Leader of the Country Party who, I understand, more or less led the debate on that occasion, moved an amendment. If I may be permitted, I

shall quote from a newspaper cutting dated the 23rd November, 1956, which I have here—

The Legislative Assembly last night decided that any land agreement involving more than 5,000 acres negotiated by the State Government from January 1, 1957, must be ratified by Parliament within six months—or the agreement would be cancelled.

The ratification amendment to the Land Act Amendment Bill was moved by the Leader of the Country Party (Mr. Watts).

The Bill will enable the Government to negotiate for the sale of land above the 5,000-acre limit at present in the Act.

The Minister for Works (Mr. Tonkin) said that the Government had no objection to the amendment, which was agreed to on the voices.

Mr. Court (L.C.L., Nedlands) asked when Parliament would have an opportunity of discussing the agreement for the sale of 1,500,000 acres at Esperance. He thought that if the Bill were agreed to, the agreement would automatically be ratified.

It is fair to say that in moving the amendment, the Leader of the Country Party had in mind the traditional principle which we have adhered to in Western Australia in respect to the limited acreage of Crown land which any one man might apply for and obtain. The idea, no doubt, is to avoid the position of one man or one individual obtaining large areas of land from the Crown.

At that time, and at the signing of the agreement Western Australia was the recipient, as it were, of propaganda and publicity, the like of which we had never known. The publicity we received was invaluable. It placed our land development prospects before the people of Australia and, indeed, overseas, to such an extent that everyone was talking about Esperance; and there was an air of confidence in the future of this district. I think Western Australians, even those who had some doubt as to the future progress and ultimate achievements of the agreement, were loth to express themselves, but, as far as was possible, got right behind the Government in its effort to make an agreement with the Chase Syndicate.

The Government, in accepting the opportunity as it was presented to it, is to be congratulated, because at that time it was evidently misled—if I might say so—in respect to the availability of the money to carry out this project, the same as each and every one of the hon. members in this House and another place was misled. It is interesting, also, to point out that the agreement was criticised by many hon.

members, and possibly by people outside the House, because it was so general. It contained no "musts" or "wills" but was all "mays" and "might bes" and, in fact, did not mean a great deal. I do not know whether hon. members have read the agreement. It is a simple document which did not demand a great deal, and was not very binding on either side. The House might be interested to hear one or two clauses of it—

Whereas:

In January One Thousand nine hundred and fifty-four a committee was appointed by the Government known as the "Esperance Downs Development Advisory Committee" to advise and report upon the special difficulties and problems associated with agriculture development of the area known as the Esperance Downs extending from approximately the No. 1 Rabbit Proof Fence on the west to approximately 50 miles east of Esperance and from the Coastline to a latitude about 10 miles north of Gibson.

On the third day of June One thousand and nine hundred and fifty-five such committee presented its report to the Minister for Lands and Agriculture and from such report it appears that rapid and large scale development of the area cannot be accomplished except with the outlay of a large capital expenditure—

I think that was accepted by all at that time—

The Company being able to obtain the necessary capital for the purpose the State has offered to the Company and the Company has accepted the opportunity to effect the rapid and large scale development—

I believe that is where we all fell down. There did not seem to be sufficient investigation and research into the possibilities of the syndicate—or the company as it is named here—being able to obtain the necessary capital to carry out the project and to honour the agreement. In the first year, the agreement having provided for a blanket cover for the setting aside of 1,500,000 acres approximately—and it also provided for the taking up of certain acreages from year to year by the company—Mr. Chase appointed certain scientists from America to take charge of the farming processes at Esperance; and he made some wild statements about what was going to be achieved in the first year.

As is known now, the first year's operations were a failure, to say the least. From the evidence before us, we know the syndicate did not heed the advice or experience of the local settlers, or even of the agricultural research station which had been established there. However, because we were all so anxious that the project should

succeed, a great deal of interest was held for the proposed visit of Mr. Chase, who was returning from America for the first time.

As a matter of interest, I had visited the project area, and at that stage it appeared that everyone was so confused as to what was going to happen; how the agreement was to be honoured; how the land was to be developed and ultimately subdivided and sold, that when I returned to Kalgoorlie, I suggested to the Press that if anything was to be said, surely it was to urge Mr. Chase to make a statement on the plan which he envisaged as the ways and means of implementing the agreement he had made with the Government. However, he came and he went away again, telling us very little of the details or the proposals he had in mind.

This motion is being moved because, all through the period, and right up to this minute, the Government has failed to make any worth-while statement or give any information regarding the position as it stands at the present time.

It has not indicated what it will do or the line it will take in the event of Mr. Chase and the members of his syndicate advising that it is impossible for them to carry on. At this stage, I understand they have not advised the Government to that extent.

However, it is quite obvious from what is being said by representatives of the Chase Syndicate who have visited the State recently that the money that was expected is not forthcoming. It might well have been that a great deal of criticism had been levelled against them. Local directors seem to be resigning without giving any reason. One after the other managers came and went. Doctors of science and agriculture and men of standing all went on their way. It appeared to the man in the street that all was not well at Esperance, and it must have been very obvious to the Minister for Agriculture and the Government.

It is quite understandable that, even in the face of these developments, the Government hoped that something would turn up. However, the time has arrived—if it is not overdue—for an official statement to be made and some action taken to clarify the position for the benefit of the public. We cannot overlook the fact that this legislation still retains for the syndicate, under option as it were, 1,500,000 acres, less the 100,000 acres it has handed back.

Whilst there is a demand for land at Esperance, I think the public is entitled to know what is to happen with that project in the future. Although I have not been informed officially, from what I have read in the Press from time to time it appears that the reason for the lack of money is that the American investors have

not been able to take advantage of the tax laws in the United States of America which are similar to ours inasmuch as they allow rebates of tax on income obtained from money invested in the development of land.

Evidently, Mr. Chase was working on the belief that these millionaires—of whom he speaks so freely—would be willing to expend their money annually on the understanding that they would be able to take advantage of the American tax laws. After the first year, it was obvious that that was not so. Uncle Sam would not agree to this syndicate or company expending money on that basis, but what was intended under the American law was that only the individual holder and owner of the property could take advantage of those provisions in that country's tax laws.

So it would appear to me that, in spite of the money that has been spent at Esperance by the Chase Syndicate—I should imagine that it is private money—there is a very slight chance of the private capital forthcoming which Mr. Chase believed would be obtainable. If he did not believe it, it was very unfortunate that he made this arrangement, because it was obvious that the money was not going to be provided.

That brings us to this question: If we are not going on with this development, what are we to do? Will the Government take advantage of the "let out" clauses? By way of suggestion, will it take half of the land and have it reclassified and subdivided and offered for settlement? Or, should it make an amendment to this agreement which would allow private individuals—Americans if it likes, or even members of the syndicate—to take up the land? Because we do not want them to lose their money or their faith in this State.

I think the majority of us would be willing to do the right thing by these people so that the problem surrounding the development of this land would be solved, and at the same time, would relieve the State of any financial burden; because we are aware that the State could not finance this project on anything like the scale that was envisaged by Mr. Chase. So is the Government prepared to come to this House with a recommendation that Parliament should make separate agreements with private individuals who would be bound by clauses similar to those in this agreement which are already binding on the Chase Syndicate?

That step, in itself, is a departure from the age-old principle to which we have adhered. I think it is only in recent days that public reference has been made to the fact that certain land had been allocated, and that there was a limit to the acreage of Crown land for which any man could apply. If it had been any man—Linkletter, Newton or anyone else—it seems to

me that we should give some consideration towards going that far provided that they, in their turn, will invest the money, develop the land, subdivide it, and ultimately make it available for settlement.

There is an anomaly here, of course. If I applied for land in these areas which are being gazetted from time to time, I would be bound by the conditional purchase provisions. I would find—as certain people at Esperance have already found—that until I got a free title to the land I could not sell it. With regard to this matter I will quote a question which I asked the Minister for Lands and which throws some light on what is happening at the present time: namely, that virgin land, unlimited in acreage is being sold by Mr. Chase to members of this syndicate. This land was purchased by the syndicate for approximately 5s. an acre from the Government. Surely this sort of practice cannot be permitted!

It is alleged that Mr. Chase is selling this land for £1 an acre. He could sell it for £6 an acre if he wanted to, because there is nothing to stop him under the provisions of this agreement. Therefore, this is an anomaly which the State Government should proceed to iron out in order to place the matter on an equitable basis. On the 4th September I asked the Premier the following question:—

Does Mr. Chase get a clear title to the land he obtains at Esperance under the agreement between Esperance Plains (Australia) Pty. Ltd. and the Government?

The Premier replied—

Upon payment of the purchase price a clear title is issued to Esperance Plains (Australia) Pty. Ltd.

Therefore, a clear title goes with the sale of that land. I then asked the Premier my second question as follows:—

Does this enable him, notwithstanding any provision in the agreement, to sell the land, undeveloped, to anyone he chooses?

to which the Premier made the following careful reply:—

Legal advice is being obtained.

We have never heard since whether that advice was obtained or what was the result. My third question was—

If this is so, how does the Government propose to ensure that land sold in this way is developed according to the terms of the agreement?

On reading the terms of the agreement and the statements made by Mr. Chase, the people of Western Australia envisaged a highly developed area in the Esperance district in years to come. They were hoping that something big and really worth while would eventuate as a result of this

agreement between the Government and the Chase Syndicate. To my third question the Premier replied—

Mr. Chase has advised verbally that transferees will be required to develop holdings in the terms of the agreement, and has promised to obtain a binding agreement from each transferee.

However, the big question of course is: Where is the binding agreement on each of these men who are now holding this land? I have much doubt as to whether such an agreement exists. The fourth question that I asked the Premier reads as follows:—

Has a title been issued by the Titles Office to the private purchasers who have bought land subject to the agreement from Mr. Chase?

to which the Premier replied as follows:—

Parcel No. 1 has been subdivided, and separate titles issued, or are about to issue, for the holdings which have been transferred.

I think that parcel was 60,000 or 70,000 acres. That land has been subdivided and I think titles are about to be issued for the holdings that have been transferred. My fifth question was—

If not, will titles be issued to the new owners?

And, in parliamentary language, the answer was—

Answered by No. (4).

This is a matter that is causing a great deal of concern among people who desire to purchase land so that they may settle upon it, and who have the money and the wherewithal to develop it. They consider that it is hardly fair—and I support the attitude that they adopt—that they should have to pay £1 an acre to Mr. Chase for this land when it could be obtained from the Crown at a much cheaper figure, because the land is undeveloped, and it will remain undeveloped unless we obtain some benefit from this agreement.

I do not advocate that the agreement should be broken in a manner that is unfair, because we are all anxious to do the right thing by the people who originally entered into negotiations with the Government. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Government, at the first opportunity—in fact, it might have to make an opportunity—will call upon Mr. Chase or his representatives to discuss ways and means to overcome the problem; and, if any progress is to be made, to take some immediate action to release the land.

On the 9th September, 1958, I asked the following question of the Minister for Lands:—

(1) What is the lot number and acreage of the first parcel taken up by Mr. Chase at Esperance?

to which the Minister replied—

(1) Neridup Location 12, containing 61,520 acres 3 roods 10 perches.

My second question was—

(2) What are the names and nationalities of people to whom Mr. Allen Chase has sold land at Esperance?

In his answers to this question and to my following question, the Minister gave the names of the people to whom Mr. Chase had sold the land, together with the lot numbers. It is interesting to note the names given, among whom appear the following:—

Beverley Randolph Galt, Esperance; 9,637 acres.

George Edward Newton, California; 9,081 acres.

Charles James Correll, California; 1,929 acres.

Robert McDonald Hixson, Los Angeles, California; 1,888 acres.

Francis Emmett Browne, California; 1,892 acres.

Robert Orville Cummins and Mary Elliott Cummins, California; 1,950 acres.

Arthur Gordon Linkletter, California; 9,445 acres.

Irving Bernard Hexter, Ohio; 1,985 acres.

Allen Tilden Chase, California; 1,850 acres.

Warren Hayes Moyer, New Jersey, and Harold Lee George, California; 1,999 acres.

Herbert Vincent Hills, California; 4,045 acres.

There are two others named who hold 2,000 acres and 4,000 acres respectively. The Minister went on to reply as follows:—

The company had advised the State that the persons to whom land within Parcel No. 1 has been transferred are members of the Chase Syndicate who fully appreciate that they must, in respect of the holdings transferred to them, carry out all the obligations of the company under the agreement with the State. Such transferees are analogous to shareholders and are not settlers within the meaning of the agreement. The transfers were necessary in order that the shareholders may avail themselves of the concessions available to owners under taxation laws of the U.S.A. and Australia.

That was the very point I made. This sort of thing was never intended by Parliament or envisaged by the people who supported the move. That was made very clear. It was not intended that this State should hand over a large area in order that a real estate business might operate in

virgin land. The object was to obtain development and settlement of the land. We regret that, through unforeseen difficulties and lack of research on the part of those who negotiated the agreement, and particularly as to where finance was coming from, a very unsatisfactory position has arisen, and this State is faced with that situation.

It is unfortunate that, if Mr. Chase has the right to sell this land to people in the U.S.A. or anywhere else, he will undoubtedly sell the choicest parts and leave the Government with the residue of the lightest of light land—that is, the problem land. This is not a very fair proposition.

If we are to develop light land—I know something about such land, because there is a huge amount in my district—we must ensure that we do not pick out all the good parts. I might mention the Eneabba land settlement project west of Three Springs. The lower part contains three or four very fine farms; but the upper portion presents difficulties, because it is a lower grade of land. The surveyors endeavoured to include in the farms which they subdivided some of the better land, if it happened to be available.

A very close watch should be kept on the activities of Mr. Chase in this matter. If the present situation is allowed to proceed—and evidently it is proceeding—the State will be left with a problem greater than any that might have arisen had the syndicate not come to this State. The claim that meatworks, abattoirs, and suchlike were to be established in Esperance really caught the imagination of everyone. I have no doubt that some day we will see those establishments in Esperance; but it appears that that time is a long way off, because we are not making the progress which was envisaged in that area.

In the meantime the price of primary products has fallen. Whilst wheat might be payable now, its future is not very secure. It is no more secure than that of wool; and wool has dropped in price to such an extent that the attraction for the development of farms, and for increased production, has disappeared. However, there are still in the Eastern States, and no doubt in Western Australia, quite a number of people who possess the necessary capital and are willing to take up the cheaper land in Western Australia, and so invest their money on a long-range basis.

Land in the Esperance district is in an area of assured rainfall, and can be developed, revitalised and fertilised under the latest methods of farming. It can be brought into production. We have no doubt about the potential production from the Esperance land. All that is required is many millions of pounds to bring the land through the developmental stage.

Mr. Bickerton: Was it not the policy of your party to be associated with the syndicate in question?

Mr. BRAND: I do not know to what the hon. member is referring. We supported the Bill and it passed through on the voices. The amendment moved by the Country Party was acceptable to the House. There was no opposition to it. What I am saying is that the Government which signed the agreement should have been in possession of all the information and should have known what was going on. It should have advised Parliament of the difficulties encountered and the action it intended to take to overcome what appears to be a real stalemate.

The cry was that we should not criticise that land development scheme, because we would undermine the confidence of people in land development in this State, particularly in Esperance. If this project fails, and falls flat on its face, it will contribute more to the lack of confidence than any criticism offered by people. We have to be candid in this matter. We should say that this project is not working out, and we should endeavour to make this land available on some other basis. The time to do that has arrived. Unless we are prepared to expedite action in making that land available to settlers, we will lose the opportunity to do so later, because time is running out and money is becoming shorter and tighter.

In recent weeks, we have heard a great deal in this House about land settlement. If it is to proceed, it can only proceed with the offer of Government capital, or Government effort, or through private enterprise. I was interested to read some of the criticisms of the hon. member for Roe concerning the agreement. He pointed out all the possibilities relating to the stalemate which has developed in Esperance. He said—

We have had far too many instances of grandiose land schemes being carried out to a certain stage and then being left in mid-air without their being able to be continued.

I would like some statement from the Government as to what it is going to do about providing funds—

He went on to talk about the individual problems of settlers in his own district who are already established on the land.

Mr. Perkins: It looks as if I was somewhat prophetic.

Mr. BRAND: It looks that way. In moving this motion, we are anxious for the Government to indicate to the House what is the future plan of the syndicate—or anyone else who is to stand in—and what attempts it is going to make to reconsider the agreement. If the Government is thinking of any basis for consideration, I would suggest one which allows the making of agreements with

individual persons for the development of the land for ultimate subdivision and re-sale.

It is very unfair indeed if the agreement in question, as it stands, is being side-stepped in principle at least, because it was not intended by this House that the land should be sold, as it is being sold, to get Mr. Chase out of his financial difficulties. Land development is not progressing in Western Australia. At one time land settlement presented an attractive and prosperous picture to people of that area and to this State, but the confidence is declining.

THE HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Premier—Northam) [9.42]: I think the Leader of the Opposition greatly over-simplified the problem of land development in the Esperance area. Listening to him one could easily be misled into believing that the problem of developing the large-scale land area of Esperance was something which could be accomplished—

Mr. Brand: I did not say anything of the sort. I said it should be tackled by the Government.

Mr. HAWKE: If the hon. member will listen carefully to what I have to say, he will not deny something which he alleged I said, but which in fact I did not say. I repeat again that anyone listening to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition could easily be misled into thinking that the problem of land development in the Esperance district was easy of solution.

Anyone who knows the location of the Esperance country in its relationship to the transport problem alone would know that land development in that part of the State, at this period of time, is not easy to achieve successfully, and not easy to achieve on a large-scale basis. It requires to be remembered and to be emphasised that Esperance is a very great distance from Perth and Fremantle. Therefore the problem of the cost of transport to anyone taking up land in that part of the State is a very great problem indeed, because it is one which hits the land settlers down there both ways. It hits them in regard to the things they have to buy, and again it hits them in regard to the things they have to sell.

So it would be very foolish for anyone to be misled into thinking that land development at Esperance is an easy problem to crack, and that all that has to be done to achieve widespread development down there, is to get enough people to apply for land, to put them on the land, and everything in the garden will become reasonably satisfactory in a short period of time.

Mr. Brand: I never said anything about a short period of time.

Mr. HAWKE: The Leader of the Opposition is adopting an attitude which it is difficult to understand, because no-one has said that he said that.

Mr. Brand: You are not getting away with that, old boy!

Mr. HAWKE: Clearly the Leader of the Opposition is tackling a hard question, when he tackles this question of the problem of land development at Esperance, about which he does not know a great deal. In fact it is quite clear from the speech he made in moving this motion that he is sort of having a 5s. ticket each way. He hands out praise to the conception of this scheme by the Chase people; he hands out some praise to them for the steps which they took; and then joins in with some other people in this State in kicking the syndicate, in saying it has failed and prophesying that it has no hope of recovery from its very difficult situation.

Mr. Brand: Has it?

Mr. HAWKE: I think that has yet to be proven. I refuse to join the very small number of people in Western Australia who are anxious to kick these people to death at this stage.

Mr. Brand: Don't talk rot!

Mr. HAWKE: It is so. It is absolutely true, because this sort of propaganda has been issued before tonight. It has come to me from some other sources. But when the issue was tested out at a public meeting at Esperance not so many nights ago, the wreckers—if I might call them so—the kickers, the knockers, were defeated, and a majority of those who attended that meeting at Esperance agreed that in all the circumstances the people associated with Mr. Chase, and Mr. Chase himself, were entitled to a further opportunity to see whether they could, in fact, succeed in their undertakings in that part of the State.

Mr. Wild: Would the Premier not agree that as there has been a complete silence from all the people who have resigned one by one, the public could only think one thing—that something was wrong?

Mr. HAWKE: The nasty people among the public would think the same way as the hon. member for Dale. The more reasonable members of the public—and they are in the great majority—would be prepared to suspend judgment and wait until the situation had developed to a more concrete stage, and they would then make a fair and reasonable decision upon all the facts as they would then be available.

Mr. Brand: You yourself, according to a Press statement, issued a warning when you received a deputation down in your office.

Mr. HAWKE: Well, what I said on that occasion, in brief, was that Mr. Chase and his colleagues were entitled to every consideration.

Mr. Brand: So they are.

Mr. HAWKE: Well, why does the Leader of the Opposition get up and say they have failed?

Mr. Brand: So they have failed!

Mr. HAWKE: As I said a moment ago, the Leader of the Opposition wants to have a 5s. ticket each way, and that is not a fair proposition. Let us have a look briefly at the essential features of this undertaking. The Leader of the Opposition agrees that when the scheme was developed and made public, we were all enthusiastically in favour of it, all keen to see it under way, and all keen to see it succeed. I think he even admitted that the publicity which the Esperance country had received, and which Western Australia had received, in regard to land settlement, as a result of the taking up of this land by Mr. Chase and his colleagues, had been a great advertisement for us, and had been of great value to us; and I think he is quite right in that.

Mr. Chase and his colleagues did not first become interested in land development in Australia at Esperance. They first became interested in land development in Australia in the Northern Territory portion, at a place called Humpty Doo. They decided, or were prevailed upon by important authorities in Australia, to undertake the development of rice-growing in that part of Australia; and Mr. Chase, and those who were his colleagues at that time, invested a lot of money in the development of rice-growing in the Northern Territory. It failed, and failed disastrously in the first year of production, particularly, I believe, because of hundreds of thousands of geese or some such pest, which gobbled up the rice as it developed.

Mr. Kelly: Brolgas.

Mr. HAWKE: In the meantime, Mr. Chase had taken up this Esperance land on behalf of himself and many of his colleagues who had put money into the rice-growing project at Humpty Doo. Naturally, the investors in the rice-growing project had received a terrific shock as a result of the failure of the first year's crop there. On top of that, they received a further great shock when the first year's results at Esperance became known. I think every hon. member of this House is aware of what happened at Esperance in the first year.

Mr. Chase very foolishly, either on his own initiative or acting upon the advice of someone who was supposed to be an expert, tried short-cut methods. He might have been over-anxious, or maybe even desperate, to produce quick, good results at Esperance to build up the confidence of his colleagues in America who had had their confidence shaken as a result of the rice-growing project at Humpty Doo. Or he might have felt that the local knowledge at Esperance, in regard to the best methods of development of the land there,

were out of date and that these short-cut methods which he decided to put into operation, or was prevailed upon to put into operation, would work out all right.

Some people have told me that had the season in question at Esperance been a very good one, Mr. Chase's gamble—if it was such—could have succeeded. Be that as it may, it was unfortunate, in any event, that the season in question was not a good one—let alone a very good one—and the final result of that season's operations at Esperance was extremely bad; and so again the confidence of the people who had invested in the rice-growing at Humpty Doo and the development of the land at Esperance, was shaken, and Mr. Chase found himself in a position where it was difficult for him to obtain, or to continue to obtain, big amounts of capital to carry on the large-scale development which had been planned for Esperance.

I feel the situation is all the more understandable when we realise that the investors concerned were 12,000 miles from the source of their investment. Had they been living in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, or Brisbane, then they could easily have come through to Esperance in a matter of hours. They could have had explained to them what had been attempted, why it had been attempted, and why it had failed; and they might have developed a far better appreciation of the situation, and might easily have developed a sympathy sufficient to cause them to re-develop their confidence.

However, as I say, they were 12,000 miles away; and when the confidence of an investor is shaken in an investment he has made 12,000 miles away, then his confidence is not easily restored; and when his confidence has been badly shaken on two occasions in regard to two sources of investment, both 12,000 miles away, it can be understood how he would tend to go cold on the situation.

That was the position in which Mr. Chase found himself, and he did not try to hide the situation from the Government. He was frank about it; and when he was last in Perth, not so many weeks ago, he frankly said he would do the utmost he could, during the present season, in regard to developing the land which was under his control. Should this present season be a good one, he said it could help very much in the direction of rebuilding confidence, and that he might be able to obtain a great deal of additional capital with which, during the next season, he could take on a greater programme of development.

He was equally frank in saying that should the current season's operations, for any reason, be poor, or otherwise fail, then he thought he would have no alternative but to ask the Government to relieve him and his colleagues entirely from the terms of the agreement.

Mr. Wild: Does the Premier then say that the reason for all these resignations is the lack of finance, the lack of capital?

Mr. HAWKE: No; I am not saying that at all. I am not dealing with that angle of the situation at all.

Mr. Wild: I think it would be very helpful if you did.

Mr. HAWKE: I am bound to say that Mr. Chase was very strongly recommended by one highly placed Minister in the present Federal Government. He was highly recommended by him; and the Minister, I am sure, is one in whom every hon. member of this House has every confidence in regard to his ability to judge a man, and certainly in regard to land development, no matter whether the land development be in Western Australia or in any other State of Australia.

I say that members of this Government, when the agreement was being negotiated originally, were considerably impressed by the information which came to us from the Federal Minister concerned. The Deputy Premier (Mr. Tonkin), as members know, was in America recently, leading the trade mission which went there from this State. While there he made his own inquiries regarding the standing and reputation of Mr. Chase; and as he might tell us when the debate is resumed next week or the week after that, he was favourably impressed by what he was able to ascertain from citizens of high standing and very wealthy citizens, in regard to the standing and reliability of Mr. Chase.

Mr. Tonkin: As were all members of the mission.

Mr. Wild: I notice you always put them in.

Mr. HAWKE: In addition, the Deputy Premier has received advice from Mr. Chase—since returning to Western Australia—that in view of the current season's progress at Esperance he is confident of being able to obtain very much more capital, for greatly increased development next season, as compared with the amount of capital which was available for land development in the area in question at Esperance during this season.

Mr. Brand: In that case it is surely fair to ask whether there is any greater substance in that statement than there was in the assurance given on the previous occasion.

Mr. HAWKE: If we are reasonably minded and fair minded in this matter, I think we have to give a great deal of weight to what has occurred in regard to the rice-growing project at Humpty Doo; and what happened at Esperance during the first year that Mr. Chase and his colleagues attempted to carry out some development there. I think the Leader of the Opposition was out of the Chamber for a few

moments, while I dealt with that angle, and I am sure that when he has opportunity of reading in Hansard what I said in that regard he will realise that, in all the circumstances, it would not be at all strange if Mr. Chase found it difficult to raise great sums of capital from those people who had previously been supplying large sums of money to him, firstly for rice-growing at Humpty Doo and, later, for land development at Esperance—

Mr. Bovell: Mr. Chase did ignore local expert advice on our farming methods, according to reports.

Mr. HAWKE: I think Mr. Chase and his colleagues were badly misled by those who advised them. After all, it would seem that there was not much sense in picking up—I do not use that term offensively—men in Queensland to manage the development of this land at Esperance. I think that was a mistake of considerable magnitude, because it could not be expected that men trained in land development and production in Queensland could immediately, or even in any short period of time, come to understand the different problems that would exist in regard to the successful development of land in the Esperance area.

Even when the Queenslanders ceased to be associated with the land development at Esperance, Mr. Chase and those associated with him did not—even then—try to obtain the services of experienced and practical Western Australians to manage the development at Esperance. Instead, they employed Victorians. I am not a farmer and never have been, and at this stage and age do not intend to be, but I hope I have sufficient commonsense to know, for sure, that land development varies considerably as between one State of the Commonwealth and another; and even as between one district and another in Western Australia, depending on rainfall, the type of soil and many other factors.

Mr. Brand: Do you know who is in charge at Esperance now?

Mr. HAWKE: I understand that one of the men in charge—there may be more than one—is a Victorian.

Mr. Brand: Have you heard from Mr. Paul Johnston with regard to this project, since he returned to America?

Mr. HAWKE: No, I have not heard from him but, as I said a moment ago, the Deputy Premier saw Mr. Chase in America a short time ago and has since had word from him. It should be said in Mr. Chase's favour that he was guided substantially, in regard to the first management of the development at Esperance, by authorities associated with the Federal Government, and I would prefer not to go any further in regard to that. The members of this Government have not blindly decided that Mr. Chase and his colleagues will succeed, irrespective of what might happen. We

realise, in view of the unfortunate bump which the American investors concerned received as the result of the rice-growing project at Humpty Doo, and the additional bump that they received as the result of the first year's operations at Esperance, that the time could come when it would be necessary to bring the agreement to an end as between the Government and the Esperance Plains company and, as I said a few moments ago, Mr. Chase has been quite frank, open and honest, about that possibility.

Fortunately from Mr. Chase's point of view—and probably from that of Esperance and of this State—the present season in the Esperance area is one of the best it has ever known, and therefore it seems certain beyond shadow of doubt, that the operations being carried out at Esperance this season will prove to be greatly successful, and that should help to rebuild confidence where it requires to be rebuilt. It is something in the nature of a tragedy that the company's first year of operations at Esperance should have been bungled, if I may use that term without being too harsh.

Clearly, if the first year's operations of the company at Esperance had been wisely directed and successfully carried out, the first season's results would have been sufficiently successful to maintain confidence, and in that event Mr. Chase would have received a great deal more capital to use, for the current season's operations, than he was in fact able to receive; and therefore a much greater area of land would have been developed during the present season and would have had the benefit of the wonderful conditions being experienced at present not only at Esperance, but also in almost every part of the southern land division of the State.

Mr. Wild: Would the Premier not agree, in view of the line he has taken, that there have been many mistakes and that they must be continuing to make similar mistakes, when in April of this year they appointed a former Victorian league footballer, who is an accountant and auditor by profession and who came over here to be managing director of the show?

Mr. HAWKE: I am advised, on that point, that he is no longer associated with the project, although whether that is a condemnation of ex-footballers becoming mixed up in land development, or not, I would not know.

Mr. Nalder: Probably he could not get a transfer.

Mr. HAWKE: Yes; perhaps Victoria would not clear him. However, the situation in that regard, in relation to the interjection of the hon. member for Dale, is, I understand, as I have explained it.

Mr. Wild: Another one gone by the board.

Mr. HAWKE: The Government has had correspondence sent to it from people in Australia who are interested in land development at Esperance; and who could become interested in a very realistic way, should the Esperance Plains Company—or the Chase Syndicate as we call it—find itself at any time in a position where it could not proceed further. When we look back over land settlement in Western Australia, we do not find a record of 100 per cent. successes—

Sir Ross McLarty: And never will.

Mr. HAWKE: As the hon. member for Murray very accurately and reliably says, we never will. Anyone would be extremely foolish to develop the idea that land settlement, in a big way, is something which is easy of successful achievement. Nothing is further from the truth. For one thing, land settlement can be successful today and the same scheme may be in difficulties tomorrow. We are seeing something of that at the present moment and have only to think of the younger men who have gone on farms in perhaps even the last four or five years, depending on the production of wool, mainly, to carry them along and help them succeed. Almost overnight the success which they had or which they could see ahead of them disappeared, owing to the very drastic fall in the price of wool.

There have been other large-scale land settlement schemes in this State over many years in the past, and some of them have failed substantially or in some degree. I think if we take a well-balanced view of land development, however, we do not decide to judge each separate endeavour on its own failure or its own degree of success; we judge land development broadly throughout the whole of the State. If we do that undoubtedly we come to the conclusion that the measure of success which has been won through the years has very greatly outweighed the measure of failure which has been suffered.

I frankly admit, however, that I would have been much more worried about the difficulties which developed in regard to the Esperance Plains project were it not for the fact that the land which they control at present will still be there if they fail utterly at any time, and have to withdraw completely. They cannot take the land away with them. It is fixed; and should the worst come to the worst—and I do not think it will—the land will still be at Esperance. It will still be available for development and production. I am not as enthusiastic at the moment as the Leader of the Opposition regarding the rush which there might be to take up this land.

Mr. Brand: Aren't there a number of applications for the land?

Mr. Watts: There has been a change in the last few months.

Mr. HAWKE: As the Leader of the Country Party says, the situation has changed not only in the last few months, but also in the last few weeks because of the drastic fall in the price of wool at the first sales this year as compared with the last sales last year; and also because the falls which were experienced in the first sales this year have been maintained at every subsequent wool sale in this State. Clearly the production of wool, up to a few weeks ago at any rate, must have been a great attraction for people who were anxious to develop land at Esperance.

Mr. Brand: I think it was more in regard to meat and stock raising.

Mr. HAWKE: When the Leader of the Opposition talks about meat I am not sure whether he is talking about beef, lamb, mutton, or pork.

Mr. Brand: I am talking about the lot, if you like to throw in pork.

Mr. HAWKE: When the Leader of the Opposition talks about the production of mutton and lamb we should also to some extent talk about the production of wool. In any event, I think the great attraction for people to take up land in recent years in Western Australia, including the land at Esperance, has been the high price of wool.

Mr. Bovell: Land has been more readily available in Western Australia than in the other States.

Mr. HAWKE: When the price of wool declines as rapidly and as substantially as it has done, it seems to me that until wool prices recover to some extent we will not have the great rush of people wanting to take up the land in this State that we have had hitherto. However, I might be wrong; I hope I am wrong. Whether or not the rush continues, the land at Esperance is still there. Nobody can take it away.

If the Esperance Plains company had been engaged in some other sort of industry—a factory or a workshops of great magnitude—and it had failed, that would have been extremely serious, because it would have meant the closing down of a large-scale industry and the total disemployment of everybody who was engaged in the industry, in addition to the very bad advertisement for that class of industry to which the Leader of the Opposition made some reference in his speech in relation to land development being undertaken by this company at Esperance.

However, those disadvantages do not apply in relation to the company's operations in land development because, as I said before—and I think it is worth repeating—the land is there. They cannot take it away, even if they want to take it away. It will remain and it will be capable of development by someone else should this company withdraw.

My greatest hope of the results which would have arisen from the operations of this company at Esperance, apart from the wealth which it would produce, was that as a result of the company's great production after a few years of effort it would be able, through its associates, to give to the port of Esperance a regular and cheap shipping service which would have cracked the greatest problem that land development in Esperance faces; namely, the cost of transport. I still hope that the company may survive the difficulties that have developed. I still hope that the objective I have just mentioned will be achieved.

Mr. Brand: Would your Government be prepared to consider some of the taxing problems which are preventing money from coming here? I refer to the taxing laws of the United States.

Mr. HAWKE: The Government would be prepared to consider any proposition which would assist the situation. I said at the beginning that I thought the greatest problem in relation to land development at Esperance is the high cost of transport because of the present isolation of that part of the State. Until that major problem of the high cost of transport can be greatly reduced or totally overcome, we cannot expect to see any swift or spectacular development of Esperance land. Once the transport cost problem is overcome, totally or largely, I think we can look forward with all the confidence in the world to major land development at Esperance, not only by wealthy people and wealthy companies, but also by smaller men.

I am sure those hon. members of this House who are today practical farmers, or who in the past have been practical farmers, do not need me to tell them that the cost of transport to farmers in the Esperance district must be tremendously heavy—

Mr. Bovell: Not only in Esperance.

Mr. HAWKE: —in comparison with the earnings which they can obtain from their individual farms. Clearly the small settlers down there must face tremendous difficulties in that direction. I still hope, not altogether against hope, that this company will succeed; that it will overcome its problems; that it will rebuild confidence in the minds of the original investors, in order that large additional sums of capital will come forward into Western Australia in each succeeding year.

Mr. Brand: Hear, hear!

Mr. HAWKE: And in order that larger areas of land, already allocated to the company, may be developed successfully.

Mr. Bovell: We all subscribe to that hope.

Mr. HAWKE: I am delighted that we do; it is good that we should. I like to be practical in these matters, but I hope hon. members of this House will realise that the

company is still in existence, and is still operating, and that it still has a chance of succeeding. Accordingly, I hope that at this stage it will not be thought reasonable, let alone necessary, for the House to carry the motion which the Leader of the Opposition has moved. I say to him, quite sincerely, as I do to every hon. member of the House, that the land in question will still be at Esperance should this company fail.

In addition, I say to all hon. members of the House, there are other people in Australia keenly interested in this land. I think they would be willing to take up the land and to invest large sums of capital in it for its continuing development. Some people might say, "Why not kick the present company out, and get the new people in as quickly as possible?"

Mr. Brand: I think, fairly, they would ask, "What are the plans and just how long?" Is there any reasonable time we can allow this to go on and not lose opportunities of getting these other people in?

Mr. HAWKE: I said earlier—and that might have been the short period during which the Leader of the Opposition was unavoidably out of the Chamber—that the current season is a crucial one for the Esperance Plains company. Should the results this season be poor, then I think we can take it for granted that the company would ask to be relieved of whatever responsibilities are upon it in the terms of the agreement.

So clearly, the situation at the moment is that the Government is giving the company at least until the end of this season—and probably until the end of this calendar year—to prove, in a practical way, that sufficient capital will be available to the company in succeeding years, to enable it to live reasonably up to the obligations which the agreement places upon it. In all the circumstances I feel that it would not only be unfair and unjust but, to some degree, extremely cruel for the Government to kick this company when it is partly down. I should hope no hon. member of this House would want to do that. I feel certain, from my knowledge of individual members, that no-one here would wish to do that.

Accordingly, I ask hon. members to realise that the situation is one which is reasonably delicate; one which is still difficult but which, in view of the magnificent season which Esperance is having this year, and in view of the information made available by Mr. Chase in recent days to the Deputy Premier, is one that we should leave where it is for the balance of this calendar year. I appreciate the opportunity of having the matter debated in this House. I think it should be discussed by as many hon. members as feel it their duty to express their views.

It was my own thought that the least said about the whole matter at this stage, the better. We all very well know that in

parliamentary debates of this kind, not all the debate is reported. We have to rely upon the good sense of those who control the newspapers to report what is said in a balanced way, in order that everyone concerned should be given a fair deal.

So I would ask hon. members to express their views when the next opportunity offers, and tell us what they think is fair and reasonable in the circumstances. But I sincerely hope and trust that after the motion has been debated adequately, it will be allowed to stand over without a vote being taken. I think it would be most unfortunate if we lined up on this issue, particularly in a party division. That would certainly do the Esperance Plains people no good at all. It would probably further increase their difficulties and reduce their chances of raising capital. It would do Western Australia no good, and it would certainly do Esperance no good at all.

On motion by Mr. Perkins, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 16th October, 1958.

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2r.	1526
Com., report	1526
Tuberculosis (Commonwealth and State Arrangement)—	
2r.	1526
Com., report	1527
Bank Holidays Act Amendment, 1r.	1527
Weights and Measures Act Amendment—	
2r.	1527
Com., report	1528
Totalisator Duty Act Amendment, 2r.	1528
Local Government, 2r.	1528

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

The PRESIDENT: I have received from the Auditor General a copy of his report on the Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1958. It will be laid on the Table of the House.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

ALBANY REGIONAL HOSPITAL.

Fares and Travelling Time Paid to Employees.

1. The Hon. J. M. THOMSON asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) How many employees engaged on the Albany regional hospital building are receiving fares and travelling time?

(2) What is the calculated radius from the Albany post office to the new hospital site?

(3) What is the distance by road from the post office to site?

(4) If fares and travelling time are being allowed how are the rates calculated?

(5) What does the extra money per man amount to per week?

(6) What is the total amount paid for fares and travelling time from commencement of work on the Albany regional hospital building until the last pay period?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND replied:

(1) One hundred and twenty-eight at the present time, in accordance with Clause 18 of the Building Trades Award.

(2) Two miles to centre of site.

(3) Two and one half miles.

(4) Four shillings per day in accordance with Clause 18 of Building Trades Award.

(5) One pound.

(6) Two thousand one hundred and sixty-three pounds.

Tabling of Plans.

2. The Hon. J. M. THOMSON asked the Minister for Railways:

Will the Minister have laid upon the Table of the House the plans of the Albany regional hospital for the period of two sitting days?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND replied: Yes.

RAILWAYS.

Re-opening of Bonnie Rock Line.

3. The Hon. C. R. ABBEY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Will the inquiry by Mr. A. G. Smith (Royal Commissioner) into the possible re-opening of the Bonnie Rock railway line, take place before harvesting commences in the area served by this line?

(2) If the Royal Commissioner recommends the re-opening of this line, will the Minister take steps to act immediately